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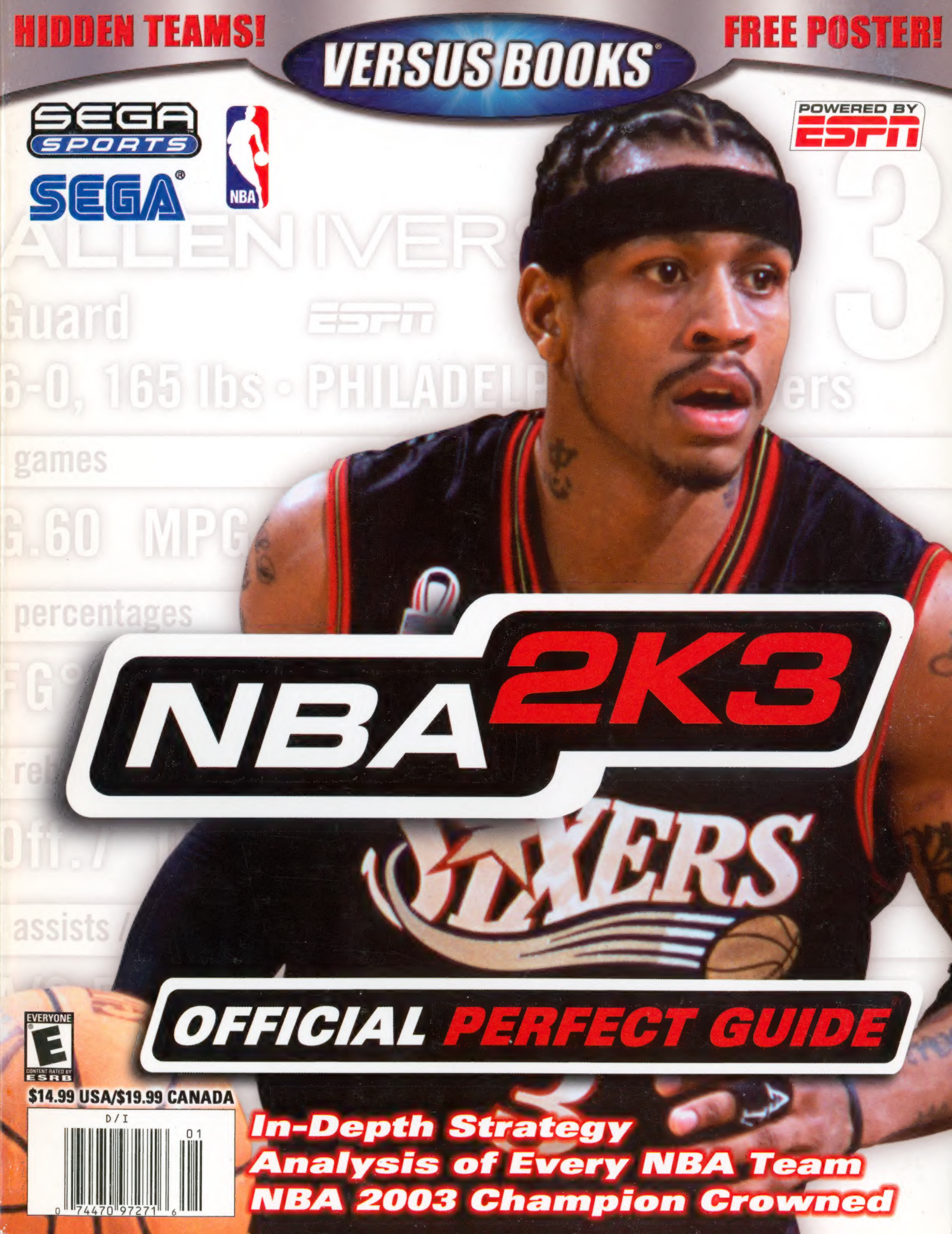

NBA 2K3

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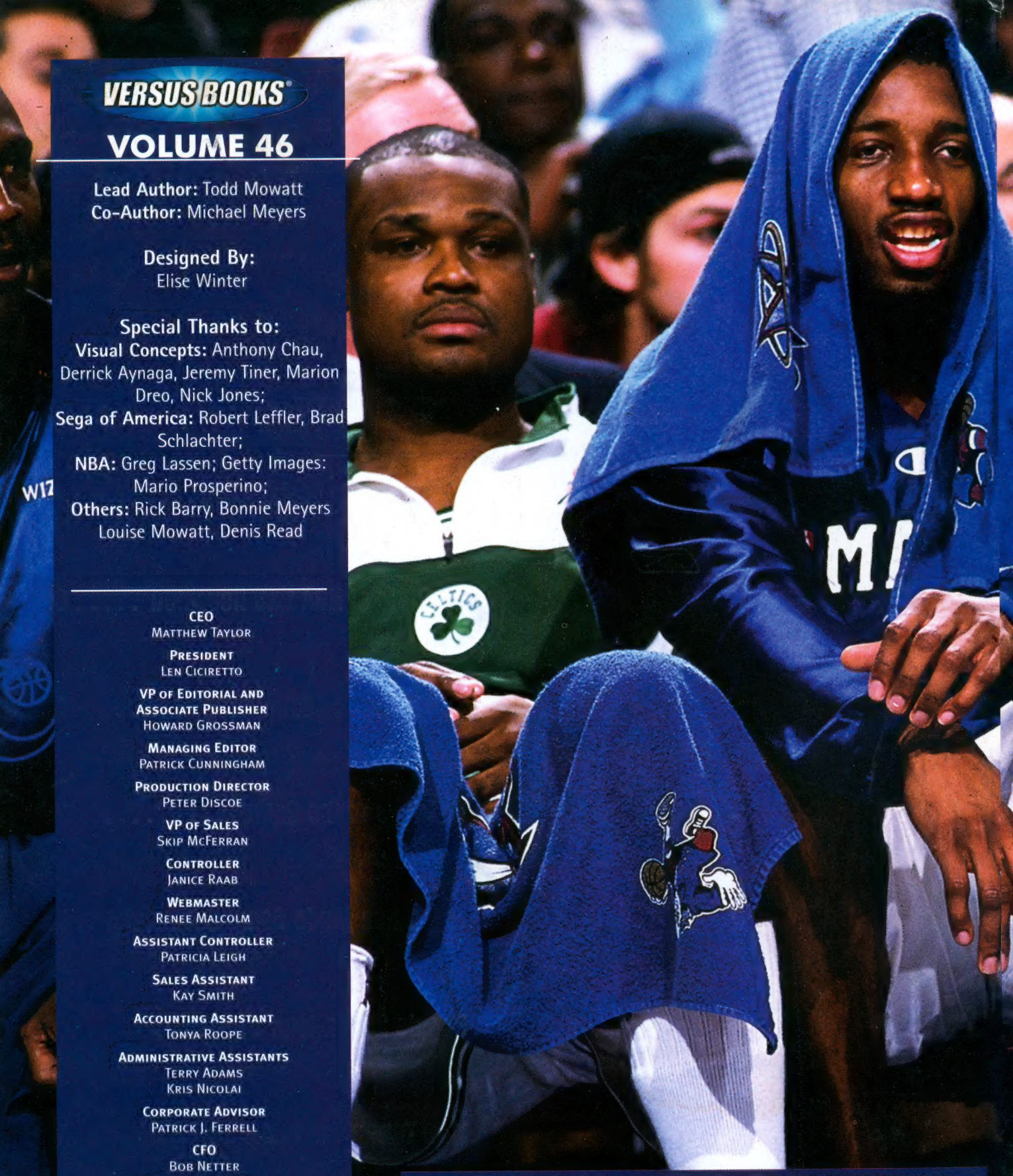

VERSUS BOOKS

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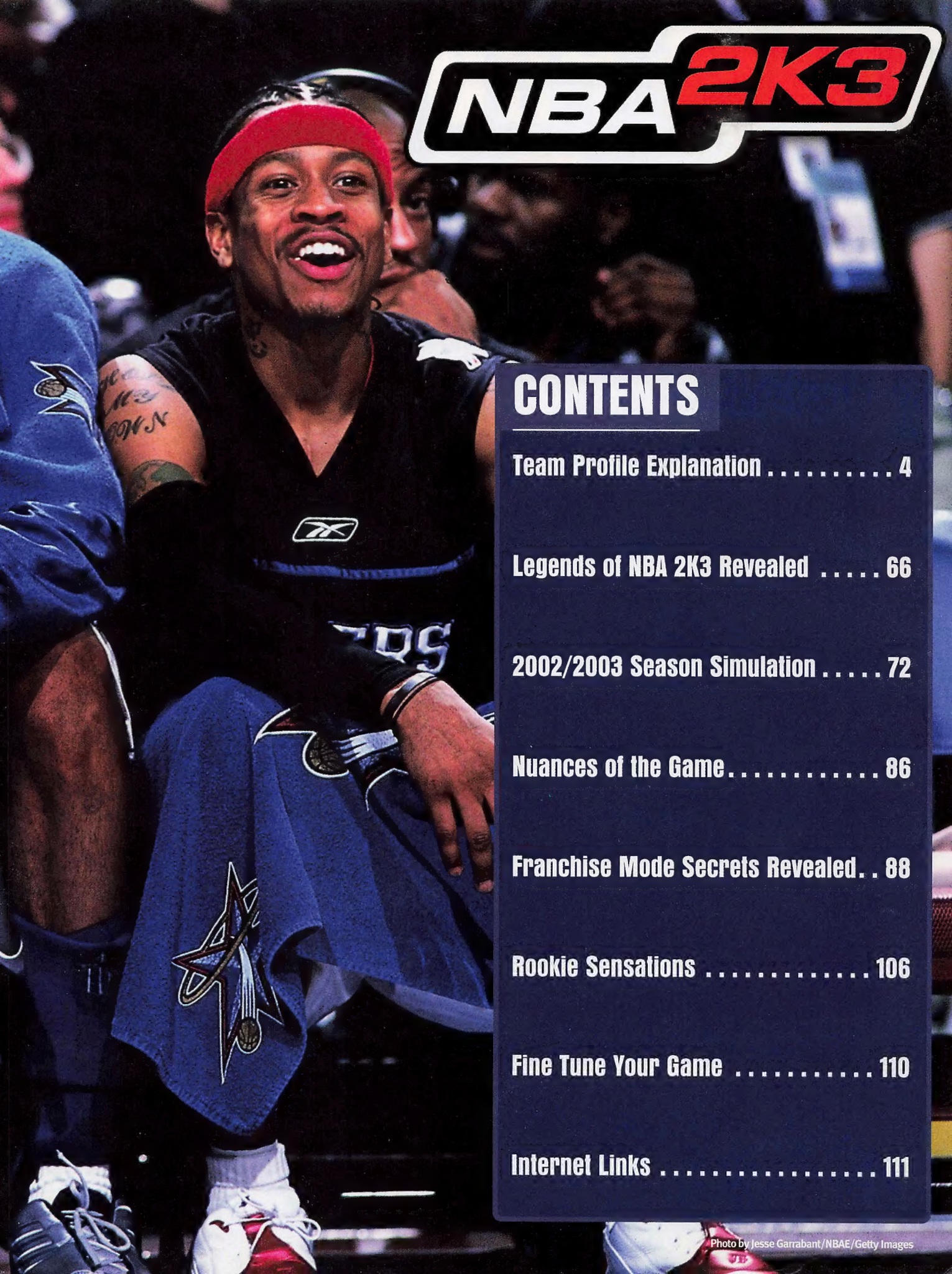

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Photo by Jesse Garrabant/NBAE/Getty Images

TEAM PROFILES

Photo by Nathaniel S. Butler/ NBAE/Getty Images

Team Profile Explanation

Team Capsule
Details on the NBA team, their prospects for this season and some information on their key players.

Star Player
Information on the team's go-to guy, including all his ratings in NBA 2K3.

NBA 2K3

New Jersey Nets

Photo by Ezra Shaw/NBAE/Getty Images

Star Player

Jason Kidd - PG:
Much of the Nets remarkable turnaround last season can be attributed to the addition of Jason Kidd. He is perhaps, the best playmaker in the NBA – the ideal "make his teammates better" type of player that every coach would love to have running the floor for them. Additionally, Kidd is the league's best defensive point guard, and an excellent rebounder – which explains why he had so many triple-doubles last season. Because Kidd isn't the best medium range shooter, the best way run the Net's offense in NBA 2K3 is to drive the paint with Kidd, then dish off to the open man for an easy bucket.

NBA 2K3 Ratings

Jason Kid

Overall	Close	Medium	3pt	FT	Layup	Dunk	Handle	Pass	PostOffense
94	97	75	80	83	90	50	90	95	65
Post Def	**Block**	**Steal**	**OffReb**	**DefReb**	**Speed**	**Stamina**	**Durability**	**Def Aw**	**Off Aware**
65	55	90	59	88	95	99	80	90	95

10 team profile team profile team profile

Team Profile Explanation

Team Profiles

New Jersey Nets—Atlantic Division

Team Capsule

TEAM RATING		
Offense	Defense	Overall
76	98	84

The 2001-02 New Jersey Nets were one of the great turnaround stories in modern day professional sports. Doubling their previous year's win total (26 to 52), the Nets vaulted to the top of the Eastern Conference enroute to an appearance as this year's Laker dance partner in the NBA Finals. While the Nets went out of the Finals without putting up much of a struggle, they have built a foundation that will make them a strong contender for years to come. The Nets are a team with a number of versatile players who are both scoring options and strong defenders. Led by one of the most talented point guards in the NBA, the Nets strengthened their middle with the acquisition of a top rebounding-shot blocking center, Dikembe Mutombo from Philadelphia. The Nets gave up scoring forward Keith Van Horn in the deal with Philadelphia, so their will be more of an offensive burden on Kenyon Martin, Richard Jefferson, and Kerry Kittles this season. The addition of Rodney Rogers from the Boston Celtics gives the Nets one more scoring forward to add to the mix.

Starting Lineup	2K3 Rating	2K2 Rating	+/-	Key Stat
Jason Kidd	94	96	-2	#1 rebounder, #2 assists and steals among NBA PGs
Dikembe Mutombo	82	92	-10	still a defensive presence in middle despite age
Kerry Kittles	78	77	+1	Second on team in steals with 130
Kenyon Martin	78	83	-5	Led NJ in scoring with 14.9 ppg

Key Additions	Position	From
Dikembe Mutombo	C	Philadelphia
Rodney Rogers	F	Boston
Chris Childs	G	Toronto

Off Season Subtractions	Position	To
Keith Van Horn	F	Philadelphia
Todd MacCulloch	C	Philadelphia

Draft Recap	School	The Skinny
Nenad Krstic (24)	Yugoslavia	Playing over seas this season, not in NBA 2K3

Big Ratings Changes:	Change	The Skinny
Dikembe Mutombo	Down 10	Mutombo is beginning to show some age, still a top shot blocker

team profile team profile team profile

Photo by Nathaniel S. Butler/NBAE/Getty Images

Star Player

Paul Pierce - F

Pierce is one of the most prolific scorers in the NBA with the ability to hit a shot from anywhere on the court. He finished as the total points league leader last season, the first Celtic to do that in NBA history. Although he doesn't possess the great speed of some of the top guards in the league such as Allen Iverson or Ray Allen, he more than makes up for that with a decent post game, and good defensive rebounding ability. He'll always be one of the top picks in an NBA 2K3 fantasy draft.

NBA 2K3 Ratings

Paul Pierce

Overall	Close	Medium	3pt	FT	Layup	Dunk	Handle	Pass	PostOffense
93	97	92	91	80	90	80	85	60	75
Post Def	**Block**	**Steal**	**OffReb**	**DefReb**	**Speed**	**Stamina**	**Durability**	**Def Aw**	**Off Aware**
75	65	80	65	85	80	99	90	85	85

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Boston Celtics—Atlantic Division

Team Capsule

TEAM RATING		
Offense	Defense	Overall
84	66	76

The Celtics were another of the great surprises of the 2001-02 NBA season as they won 49 games. The Celts made the playoffs for the first time in seven years, and gave the New Jersey Nets a run in the Eastern Conference Finals before bowing out. The success of the Celtics is tied to two players, shooting guard Paul Pierce and power forward Antoine Walker. Pierce and Walker not only lead the Celtics in scoring (26.1 and 22.1 ppg respectively) they are also the team's leading rebounders.

The Celtics have a couple liabilities that will make them a challenge to take to the Finals in NBA 2K3. They are in serious need of a strong point guard. Shammond Williams (acquired in an offseason deal) is the point guard by default, but inexperienced. Often the Celtics will run their offense through Antoine Walker, using him as a point-forward, much the way the Bulls used to use Scottie Pippen. The Celtics also could use an inside scoring presence, and acquired Vin Baker from Seattle to fill that role.

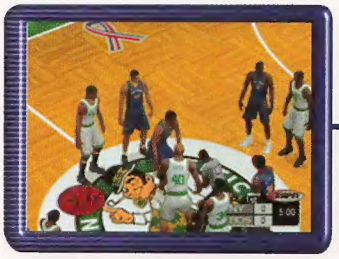
Starting Lineup	2K3 Rating	2K2 Rating	+/-	Key Stat
Paul Pierce	93	98	-5	Team leader in steals, blocks, and points
Antoine Walker	86	89	-3	Led Celtics in assists and rebounds
Vin Baker	74	73	+1	Had a 14.1 ppg for Seattle last season
Shammond Williams	66	72	-6	Averaged 4.4 ppg in limited playing time
Eric Williams	70	69	+1	Should get more playing time with Rogers gone

Key Additions	Position	From
Vin Baker	F	Seattle
Shammond Williams	G	Seattle
Bruno Sundov	C	Indiana

Off Season Subtractions	Position	To
Kenny Anderson	G	Seattle
Vitaly Potapenko	F-C	Seattle
Joseph Forte	G	Seattle
Rodney Rogers	F	NJ

Draft Recap	School	The Skinny
No players in NBA 2K3		

Big Ratings Changes:	Change	The Skinny
None		



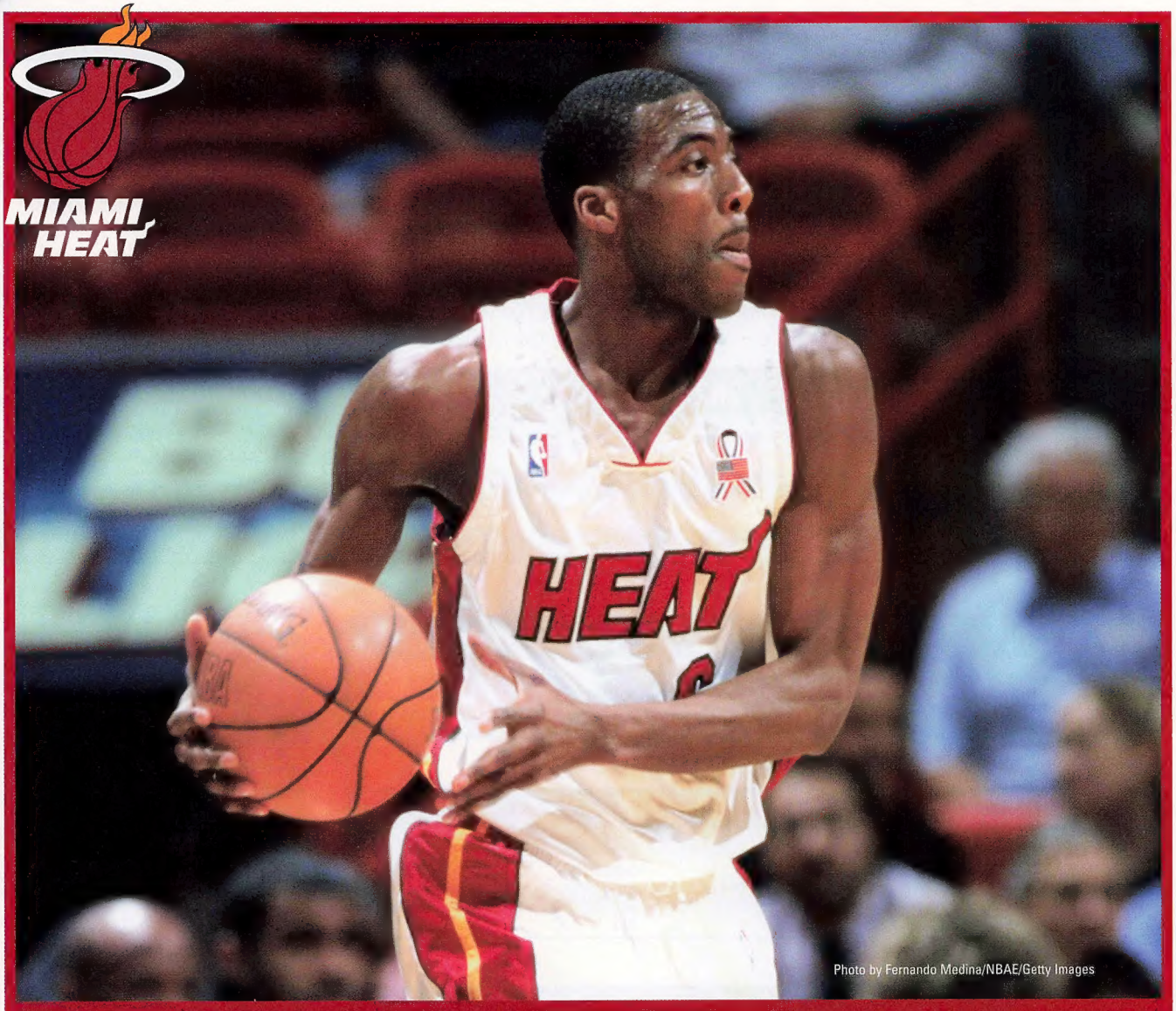


Photo by Fernando Medina/NBAE/Getty Images

Star Player

Eddie Jones - G:

Jones had a bit of a down year after some off season injury problems, but he is still one of the most versatile and talented guards in the NBA. The former Temple Owl has the ability to hit the long range jumper, or slash past his man to the hole. He is a decent ballhandler, and like most players coming out of Temple, a very tough defender. One of the downsides to Jones' versatility is he is not always a perfect fit for the role he is thrust into. Currently he fills the shooting guard role for the Heat, but considering Rod Strickland is nearing the end of his career, it wouldn't be surprising to see Jones take over the point guard spot.

NBA 2K3 Ratings

Eddie Jones

Overall	Close	Medium	3pt	FT	Layup	Dunk	Handle	Pass	PostOffense
84	94	81	85	84	80	75	80	60	70
Post Def	**Block**	**Steal**	**OffReb**	**DefReb**	**Speed**	**Stamina**	**Durability**	**Def Aw**	**Off Aware**
75	70	75	55	65	80	96	80	85	80

Miami Heat—Atlantic Division

Team Capsule

TEAM RATING		
Offense	Defense	Overall
67	82	69

The Heat spent plenty of money to wrap up some big ticket free agents signing Eddie Jones and Brian Grant to long term contracts two years ago. They didn't get much return from their investment as they got off to an abysmal start last year, going 5-23 out of the gate. Grant's scoring plummeted from 15.2 to 9.3 points per game, and Jones, who raised his numbers slightly in scoring, didn't really take over the offense the way the Heat expected him to.

The success of the Heat this season continues to be tied to Alonzo Mourning. Jones' scoring, and an instant contribution from heralded rookie Caron Butler. This is a solid defensive team, and Jones and Mourning are a talented outside-inside combination. However, to make a playoff run with the Heat in NBA 2K3, you might want to go shopping for an additional shooter and some point guard help.

Starting Lineup	2K3 Rating	2K2 Rating	+/-	Key Stat
Rod Strickland	68	70	-2	First on team in assists (463)
Eddie Jones	84	87	-3	Led team with 149 3-pointers
Caron Butler	73	NA	NA	#10 pick in NBA Draft
Brian Grant	71	80	-9	Scoring average dropped to 9.3 ppg
Alonzo Mourning	85	94	-9	186 blocks and 15.7 ppg

Key Additions	Position	From
None		

Off Season Subtractions	Position	To
Chris Gatling	F	Free Agent

Draft Recap	School	The Skinny
Caron Butler (10)	Connecticut	Expected to step right into starting small forward spot

Big Ratings Changes:	Change	The Skinny
Brian Grant	Down 9	Not generating enough scoring for the big contract he signed
Alonzo Mourning	Down 9	Still a big contributor when playing; however he is out indefinitely

Photo by Ezra Shaw/NBAE/Getty Images

Star Player

Jason Kidd - PG:

Much of the Nets' remarkable turnaround last season can be attributed to the addition of Jason Kidd. He is perhaps, the best playmaker in the NBA – the ideal "make his teammates better" type of player that every coach would love to have running the floor for them. Additionally, Kidd is the league's best defensive point guard, and an excellent rebounder – which explains why he had so many triple-doubles last season. Because Kidd isn't the greatest medium range shooter, the best way to run the Nets' offense in NBA 2K3 is to drive the paint with Kidd, then dish off to the open man for an easy bucket.

NBA 2K3 Ratings

Jason Kidd

Overall	Close	Medium	3pt	FT	Layup	Dunk	Handle	Pass	PostOffense
94	97	75	80	83	90	50	90	95	65
Post Def	**Block**	**Steal**	**OffReb**	**DefReb**	**Speed**	**Stamina**	**Durability**	**Def Aw**	**Off Aware**
65	55	90	59	88	95	99	80	90	95

New Jersey Nets—Atlantic Division

Team Capsule

TEAM RATING		
Offense	Defense	Overall
76	98	84

The 2001-02 New Jersey Nets were one of the great turnaround stories in modern day professional sports. Doubling their previous year's win total (26 to 52), the Nets vaulted to the top of the Eastern Conference en route to an appearance as this year's Laker dance partner in the NBA Finals. While the Nets went out of the Finals without putting up much of a struggle, they have built a foundation that will make them a strong contender for years to come. The Nets are a team with a number of versatile players who are both scoring options and strong defenders. Led by one of the most talented point guards in the NBA, the Nets strengthened their middle with the acquisition of a top rebounding-shot blocking center, Dikembe Mutombo from Philadelphia. The Nets gave up scoring forward Keith Van Horn in the deal with Philadelphia, so there will be more of an offensive burden on Kenyon Martin, Richard Jefferson, and Kerry Kittles this season. The addition of Rodney Rogers from the Boston Celtics gives the Nets one more scoring forward to add to the mix.

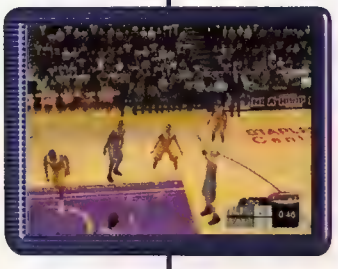
Starting Lineup	2K3 Rating	2K2 Rating	+/-	Key Stat
Jason Kidd	94	96	-2	#1 rebounder, #2 assists and steals among NBA PGs
Dikembe Mutombo	82	92	-10	Still a defensive presence in middle despite age
Kerry Kittles	78	77	+1	Second on team in steals with 130
Kenyon Martin	78	83	-5	Led NJ in scoring with 14.9 ppg
Richard Jefferson	73	69	+4	Shot .457 from the field

Key Additions	Position	From
Dikembe Mutombo	C	Philadelphia
Rodney Rogers	F	Boston
Chris Childs	G	Toronto

Off Season Subtractions	Position	To
Keith Van Horn	F	Philadelphia
Todd MacCulloch	C	Philadelphia

Draft Recap	School	The Skinny
Nenad Krstic (24)	Yugoslavia	Playing overseas this season, not in NBA 2K3

Big Ratings Changes:	Change	The Skinny
Dikembe Mutombo	Down 10	Mutombo is beginning to show some age, still a top shot blocker



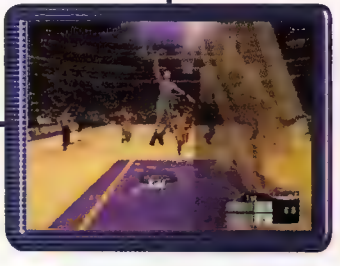


Photo by Rocky Widner/NBAE/Getty Images

Star Player

Latrell Sprewell - SF:

Heading into his 11th season in the NBA (5th with the Knicks) Sprewell is a consistent scoring threat who can usually be counted on for around 20 points a game. The lack of an inside game caused Latrell Sprewell to shoot more three-point shots last season, but he is really more effective as a player who looks first to take the ball to the basket. He has enough speed and is a good enough ball handler to usually find a way around his defender and create a high percentage shot for himself close to the basket.

NBA 2K3 Ratings

Latrell Sprewell

Overall	Close	Medium	3pt	FT	Layup	Dunk	Handle	Pass	PostOffense
85	84	83	82	70	85	80	85	70	70
Post Def	**Block**	**Steal**	**OffReb**	**DefReb**	**Speed**	**Stamina**	**Durability**	**Def Aw**	**Off Aware**
70	70	60	60	70	85	95	90	85	80

New York Knicks—Atlantic Division

TEAM RATING		
Offense	Defense	Overall
83	83	83

Team Capsule

The NY Knicks, coming off their worst season in 15 years, did some major retooling during the off-season, acquiring All-Star forward Antonio McDyess on draft night from Denver for center Marcus Camby, point guard Mark Jackson, and their first pick in the draft, Maybyner Hilario.

The trade leaves the point guard spot wide open, although it's expected that veteran Charlie Ward will hold it until draft pick Frank Williams is ready for the role. The acquisition of McDyess instantly improves a weak Knicks inside attack, which should make it easier for star guards Latrell Sprewell and Allan Houston to get open jump shots.

Playing as the Knicks in NBA 2K3 is a challenge. After all, this is a team that finished 30-52. Your best scoring option is to run screens that free up Sprewell and Houston on the outside for open shots, or have Sprewell drive past his defender to the basket, and if doubled up, dish off to McDyess or Thomas in the paint.

Starting Lineup	2K3 Rating	2K2 Rating	+/-	Key Stat
Charlie Ward	67	72	-5	Inherits PG position by default
Allan Houston	79	85	-6	Top scorer with 20.4 ppg
Latrell Sprewell	85	90	-5	Hit 145 3 pt shots to lead team
Antonio McDyess	84	92	-8	Averaged 11.3 ppg in 10 games last year
Kurt Thomas	77	83	-6	13.9 ppg and 9.1 rebounds, a career best

Key Additions	Position	From
Antonio McDyess	F	Denver

Off Season Subtractions	Position	To
Marcus Camby	F-C	Denver
Mark Jackson	PG	Denver

Draft Recap	School	The Skinny
Frank Williams (25)	Illinois	Could be running the point for the Knicks by mid-season

Big Ratings Changes:	Change	The Skinny
Antonio McDyess	Down 8	Missed most of last year due to knee surgery

Photo by Fernando Medina/NBAE/Getty Images

Star Player

Tracy McGrady - G-F:

McGrady is a budding superstar at the guard spot. He is one of only two players to average at least 25 points, 5 rebounds, and 5 assists per game last season – the other being Kobe Bryant. What McGrady doesn't have, that Kobe does, is a dominating center to help clear out the paint. Because of this, McGrady is forced to be in the middle of everything at both ends of the floor. In NBA 2K3, McGrady is one of the most balanced players, with an accurate close and mid-range shot, good ball handling skills, decent speed, and excellent defensive awareness.

NBA 2K3 Ratings

Tracy McGrady

Overall	Close	Medium	3pt	FT	Layup	Dunk	Handle	Pass	PostOffense
96	97	94	82	77	90	90	90	75	75
Post Def	**Block**	**Steal**	**OffReb**	**DefReb**	**Speed**	**Stamina**	**Durability**	**Def Aw**	**Off Aware**
75	70	78	72	82	85	99	90	90	85

Orlando Magic—Atlantic Division

Team Capsule

TEAM RATING		
Offense	Defense	Overall
84	83	83

The NBA 2K3 version of the Orlando Magic is more powerful than its real life counterpart. The key difference is the digital Magic has a healthy Grant Hill in its line-up.

Hill, who has spent most of his time with the Magic on the disabled list since signing with them in 2000, only played in 14 games last year. Even with so much time on the shelf, he still contributed 16.8 points per game and added 8.9 rebounds. A Magic squad with Hill is far superior to one without.

Towering 23-year-old guard Tracy McGrady is the key to the Orlando offense. He's great in the low post, and has an excellent mid-range shot. Expect him to draw a lot of attention when he has the ball. Kick the rock to an open Hill, Pat Garrity or Mike Miller when that happens. They can all stick the open jumper – outside shooting is one of the Magic's strengths.

Starting Lineup	2K3 Rating	2K2 Rating	+/-	Key Stat
Darrel Armstrong	78	84	-6	453 assists and 157 steals to lead Magic
Tracy McGrady	96	95	+1	Led Magic in rebounding and scoring
Grant Hill	83	88	-5	Only has played 18 games in two seasons
Pat Garrity	70	76	-6	Shot .427 from 3 point range
Horace Grant	73	76	-3	Contributed 8.0 ppg

Key Additions	Position	From
Jacque Vaughn	PG	Atlanta
Olumide Oyedeji	C	Seattle

Off Season Subtractions	Position	To
Monty Williams	F	Philadelphia
Don Reid	F	Denver
Troy Hudson	G	Minnesota

Draft Recap	School	The Skinny
Ryan Humphrey (19)	Notre Dame	6-8 forward should contribute in post

Big Ratings Changes:	Change	The Skinny
None		

Star Player

Allen Iverson - SG:

Iverson is one of the quickest players in NBA 2K3. His excellent ball handling skills combined with that lightning speed makes him a threat to score whenever he touches the ball. Iverson's medium and three-point shot ability is good, not great, so he's best when he's driving past his defender to the hoop.

NBA 2K3 Ratings

Allen Iverson

Overall	Close	Medium	3pt	FT	Layup	Dunk	Handle	Pass	PostOffense
90	97	81	83	71	90	60	95	70	60
Post Def	**Block**	**Steal**	**OffReb**	**DefReb**	**Speed**	**Stamina**	**Durability**	**Def Aw**	**Off Aware**
60	50	80	50	60	95	99	90	95	90

Philadelphia 76ers — Atlantic Division

Team Capsule

TEAM RATING		
Offense	Defense	Overall
86	90	86

The 2001-02 version of the Sixers were a mere shadow of the team that played the Lakers in the NBA finals in 2000-2001. Much of their downfall can be chalked up to injury, as only Matt Harpring and Dikembe Mutombo played 80 games last season, and offseason surgeries kept Allen Iverson and Aaron McKie out of action early on.

The Sixers' success the past couple years can be chalked up to Iverson and coach Larry Brown's coaching expertise and emphasis on defense. With top defensive center Mutombo shipped off to NJ, Philly will need a better shooting year out of Iverson (only .398 FG% last season) if they're going to challenge for a top playoff seed in the east.

The Sixers moved to revamp their lineup, trading ageless defender Mutombo to the NJ Nets for former Sixers forward Keith Van Horn and Todd MacCulloch. Van Horn, in theory, gives the Sixers the second scoring option they've been looking for these past couple years to complement Allen Iverson. With the return of big man MacCulloch, the Sixers get dramatically younger at the center spot, but may have weakened themselves defensively.

Starting Lineup	2K3 Rating	2K2 Rating	+/-	Key Stat
Allen Iverson	90	94	-4	31.4 ppg to lead NBA in scoring
Eric Snow	74	77	-3	1.6 steals per game
Derrick Coleman	78	79	-1	15.1 ppg
Todd MacCulloch	72	81	-9	1.1 blocks per game
Keith Van Horn	77	88	-11	14.8 ppg, 7.5 rpg

Key Additions	Position	From
Keith Van Horn	F	NJ
Todd MacCulloch	C	NJ

Other Additions	Position	From
Greg Buckner	F	Dallas
Monty Williams	F	Orlando
Mark Bryant	F/C	SA

Off Season Subtractions	Position	To
Dikembe Mutombo	C	NJ
Craig "Speedy" Claxton	PG	San Antonio
Matt Harpring	F	Utah

Draft Recap	School	The Skinny
John Salmons (26)	Miami	Decent ballhandler will try to replace Speedy Claxton
Sam Clancy (45)	USC	Knee injury caused this talented PF to slip to second round of NBA Draft

Big Ratings Changes:	Change	The Skinny
Keith Van Horn	Down 11	Doesn't play much defense and should rebound more for his size
Todd MacCulloch	Down 9	2nd Year Player Downgrade

Washington Wizards

Star Player

Kwame Brown - F-C:

Heading into his second NBA season, Brown, the first pick in the 2001 NBA Draft, had yet to make a major impact in the league. The 6' 11" forward-center contributed almost 200 rebounds in very limited minutes in his first year, but the talent is obvious. It won't be long before Brown is living up to his number one selection status.

NBA 2K3 Ratings

Kwame Brown

Overall	Close	Medium	3pt	FT	Layup	Dunk	Handle	Pass	PostOffense
62	70	61	50	70	65	75	75	50	70
Post Def	**Block**	**Steal**	**OffReb**	**DefReb**	**Speed**	**Stamina**	**Durability**	**Def Aw**	**Off Aware**
70	65	50	58	70	70	94	80	50	60

Washington Wizards—Atlantic Division

Team Capsule

TEAM RATING		
Offense	Defense	Overall
69	61	63

The Wizards are a young, rebuilding team that just happens to have a multi-talented 39-year-old off guard leading them down the floor. After three seasons in "retirement," Michael Jordan suited up once more and helped a very green Wizard squad improve and even make a run at a playoff spot.

Jordan and his amazing talent were able to compensate for a lot of Wizard flaws. They were near the bottom of the NBA in blocked shots and steals, and had virtually no inside offense. They did have the best three-point shooting percentage in the NBA (.388) but didn't take enough shots from behind the arc for that statistic to matter.

Taking the Wizards in franchise mode is a challenge because they have limited scoring options. Jordan is an obvious one, but he doesn't have the accurate shooting range he once had. Richard Hamilton can score from short and mid-range and improving point guard Chris Whitney is a long-distance gunner.

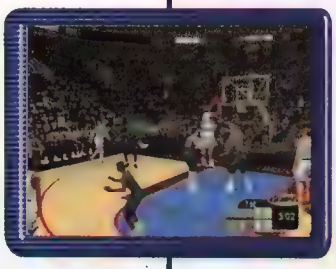
Starting Lineup	2K3 Rating	2K2 Rating	+/-	Key Stat
Chris Whitney	68	75	-7	314 assists to lead team
Richard Hamilton	79	75	+4	#2 scorer on team with 20 ppg
Michael Jordan	88	93	-5	Still can play; 22.9 ppg
Christian Laettner	70	73	-3	Averaged 7.1 ppg
Jahidi White	66	72	-6	Shot team high .538

Key Additions	Position	From
Larry Hughes	G	Golden State

Off Season Subtractions	Position	To
Courtney Alexander	G	New Orleans

Draft Recap	School	The Skinny
Jared Jefferies (11)	Indiana	Should contribute immediately as a post up threat
Juan Dixon (17)	Maryland	Local favorite will be groomed for point guard position

Big Ratings Changes:	Change	The Skinny
Richard Hamilton	Up 4	A rising young star ready to assume leader role from Jordan



ATLANTA HAWKS

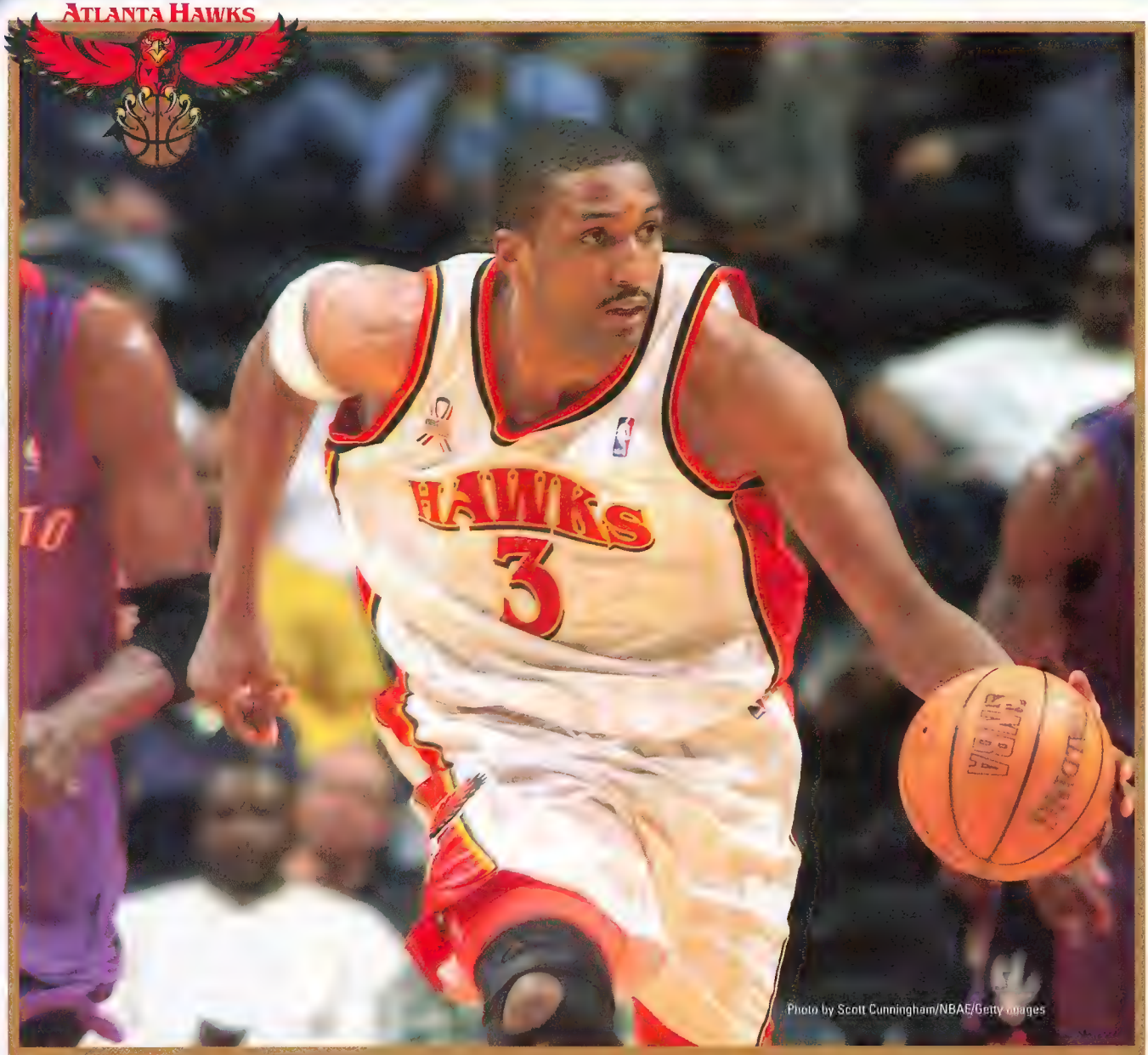


Photo by Scott Cunningham/NBAE/Getty Images

Star Player

Shareef Abdur-Rahim:

Leading man Abdur-Rahim has a quiet inside game but can put points on the board. He combined with guard Jason Terry to score over 40 points per game. That point total may drop a bit with the addition of front court scorer Glenn Robinson, but if there's improvement from the point guard position, then might be the combination needed to keep Abdur-Rahim's numbers stellar.

NBA 2K3 Ratings

Shareef Abdur-Rahim

Overall	Close	Medium	3pt	FT	Layup	Dunk	Handle	Pass	PostOffense
84	97	70	62	81	70	75	75	50	90
Post Def	Block	Steal	OffReb	DefReb	Speed	Stamina	Durability	Def Aw	Off Aware
80	70	55	82	88	70	95	90	70	85

Atlanta Hawks—Central Division

Team Capsule

TEAM RATING		
Offense	Defense	Overall
80	86	80

The Hawks only won 33 games last season, finishing 17 games out of first in the Central Division, but there is much reason for optimism in Atlanta. A rebuilt front court, anchored by new acquisition Glenn Robinson (who came over in a trade with Milwaukee), and the return of defensive stalwart Theo Ratliff, should vastly improve the Hawks' fortunes.

Forwards Alan Henderson and Ratliff combined to miss 135 games last year. Their return gives the Hawks an imposing front court rotation that match up well with just about anyone in the paint. Rookie Dan Dickau of Gonzaga, a steal as the #28 pick in the draft, gives the Hawks another outside shooter to complement guard Jason Terry. If this team can find an answer at the point (right now Emanual Davis holds the spot for Dickau), a return to the playoffs isn't out of the question.

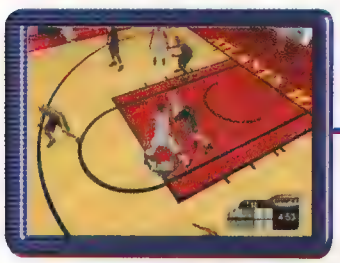
Starting Lineup	2K3 Rating	2K2 Rating	+/-	Key Stat
Emanual Davis	66	71	-5	68 assists in 28 games
Jason Terry	79	82	-3	Averaged 19.3 ppg, with 144 steals
Glenn Robinson	83	90	-7	Adds 20.7 ppg and 6.2 rebounds to Hawks
Shareef Abdur-Rahim	84	89	-5	Led Hawks in scoring, rebounds and blocks
Theo Ratliff	73	87	-14	Missed all but three games last season

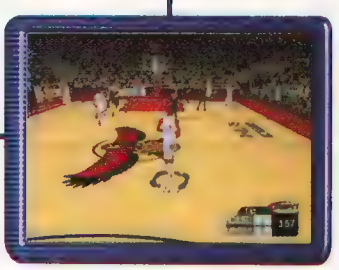
Key Additions	Position	From
Glenn Robinson	F	Milwaukee

Off Season Subtractions	Position	To
Jacque Vaughn	G	Orlando
Toni Kukoc	F	Milwaukee
Leon Smith	PF	Milwaukee

Draft Recap	School	The Skinny
Dan Dickau (28)	Gonzaga	Added outside firepower and possible help at the point

Big Ratings Changes:	Change	The Skinny
Theo Ratliff	Down 14	Ratliff missed almost all of last season





Star Player

Jalen Rose - SG:

Rose averaged 23.8 points per game after coming over from the Indiana Pacers in a midseason trade. His ability to hit the long range shot or take the ball to the basket makes him one of the only realistic scoring options on the 2002-2003 edition of the Chicago Bulls.

NBA 2K3 Ratings

Jalen Rose

Overall	Close	Medium	3pt	FT	Layup	Dunk	Handle	Pass	PostOffense
82	94	83	82	84	80	70	85	75	70
Post Def	**Block**	**Steal**	**OffReb**	**DefReb**	**Speed**	**Stamina**	**Durability**	**Def Aw**	**Off Aware**
70	55	55	50	70	80	96	80	75	65

Chicago Bulls—Central Division

Team Capsule

TEAM RATING		
Offense	Defense	Overall
71	60	65

A 21 win season secured the #2 pick in the NBA Draft for the Chicago Bulls, talented point guard and College Player of the Year, Jay Williams of Duke. Williams is being counted on to help an anemic scoring attack improve, as well as provide a defensive presence at the point for one of the worse defensive teams in the NBA. His backcourt mate is mid-season addition Jalen Rose from the Indiana Pacers, a versatile inside-outside player who remains the Bulls' main scoring threat.

If you're going to play the Bulls in franchise mode you should be very patient. The Bulls are one of the youngest teams in the NBA, with most players on their roster having 2 years or less experience. However, there is talent on this team. Rose, free agent signee Donyell Marshall and third year player Marcus Fizer can all score, and Williams also can hit the outside shot.

Starting Lineup	2K3 Rating	2K2 Rating	+/-	Key Stat
Jay Williams	80	NA	NA	#2 pick in 2002 NBA Draft
Jalen Rose	82	91	-9	Versatile scorer and team leader
Tyson Chandler	68	62	+6	Improving 19 year old will be inside force some day
Donyell Marshall	79	85	-5	Added shooter improved game while with Utah
Eddy Curry	65	70	-5	Another youngster who should only improve

Key Additions	Position	From
Corie Blount	F	Philadelphia
Donyell Marshall	F	Utah

Off Season Subtractions	Position	To
AJ Guyton	G	LA Lakers

Draft Recap	School	The Skinny
Jay Williams (2)	Duke	#2 pick in the NBA Draft, gives the Bulls their best chance at improvement
Roger Mason Jr. (31)	Virginia	Versatile guard

Big Ratings Changes:	Change	The Skinny
Tyson Chandler	+6	19 year old improved as year went on, led Bulls with 93 blocked shots
Jalen Rose	-9	Was the only scoring option for Bulls after coming over from Indiana

Photo by Fernando Medina/NBAE/Getty Images

Star Player

Lamond Murray- F:

The Cavaliers don't have a true star right now. Murray gets the role of go-to guy by default – everyone else is either too young or not that much of a scoring threat. Murray led the Cavs in points per game last season with a 16.6 average. He is also a talented 3-point shooter, hitting them at a .424 percentage. On another team though, he'd just be a role player, and is really just holding the helm right now until Dajuan Wagner or Darius Miles is ready to step up and take over.

NBA 2K3 Ratings

Lamond Murray

Overall	Close	Medium	3pt	FT	Layup	Dunk	Handle	Pass	PostOffense
78	89	75	77	76	80	75	75	50	75
Post Def	**Block**	**Steal**	**OffReb**	**DefReb**	**Speed**	**Stamina**	**Durability**	**Def Aw**	**Off Aware**
75	65	60	62	72	70	77	70	70	75

Cleveland Cavaliers—Central Division

Team Capsule

TEAM RATING		
Offense	Defense	Overall
61	66	62

The Cleveland Cavaliers have not won very much as of late. They haven't won a playoff series in over 10 years, and they haven't put together a 40 win season or better since 1997-98. To make matters worse, they traded away their best player to the LA Clippers, stellar point guard Andre Miller, during the off-season. Then, they shipped off their top three-point threat, Wesley Person, to Memphis. Can you say "going down?"

The Cavaliers are starting to resemble the rebuilding Chicago Bulls, with a couple of aging front court players in forward Tyrone Hill and oft-injured center, Zydrunas Ilgauskas, and a number of young building blocks that will require a few years of NBA seasoning before they can really make a positive impact on this franchise.

The young nucleus the Cavs are trying to build around are rookie guard Dajuan Wagner of Memphis and forward (and Duke graduate) Carlos Boozer. Both will log serious minutes in their first year with the team. In the Miller trade, Cleveland also acquired a couple additional young talents in future star Darius Miles and Harold Jamison.

Starting Lineup	2K3 Rating	2K2 Rating	+/-	Key Stat
Dajuan Wagner	76	NA	NA	He has no key stats yet
Ricky Davis	76	78	-2	Averaged 11.7 ppg in only 23 mins a game
Darius Miles	75	78	-3	49 percent shooter
Tyrone Hill	67	83	-16	Only played in 26 games last year
Chris Mihm	67	78	-11	Blocked 89 shots in 74 games

Key Additions	Position	From
Darius Miles	F	LA Clippers
Nick Anderson	G-F	Memphis

Off Season Subtractions	Position	To
Andre Miller	PG	LA Clippers
Wesley Person	SG	Memphis

Draft Recap	School	The Skinny
Dajuan Wagner (6)	Memphis	The Camden, NJ star goes from high school to Memphis to starting PG in the NBA in two years
Carlos Boozer	Duke	Plenty of minutes at the forward position for Boozer if he performs

Big Ratings Changes:	Change	The Skinny
Tyrone Hill	Down 16	Sliding fast or was sub-par performance all injury related?
Chris Mihm	Down 10	The Cavs really need Ilgauskas healthy

Photo by Gregg Shamus/NBAE/Getty Images

Star Player

Ben Wallace - C:

How is it possible to lead the NBA in blocked shots and rebounds, and to be named the NBA's Defensive Player of the Year, yet nobody knows your name? When you're Ben Wallace, the stellar center of the Detroit Pistons, that's how. Much like how fans pay attention to the homerun hitters in baseball, the high scorers in the NBA get all the ink. But make no mistake, Ben Wallace's defensive prowess is the most important key to the Pistons success.

NBA 2K3 Ratings

Ben Wallace

Overall	Close	Medium	3pt	FT	Layup	Dunk	Handle	Pass	PostOffense
86	79	50	50	50	60	75	50	50	75
Post Def	**Block**	**Steal**	**OffReb**	**DefReb**	**Speed**	**Stamina**	**Durability**	**Def Aw**	**Off Aware**
95	97	80	96	93	65	90	90	95	70

Detroit Pistons—Central Division

Team Capsule

TEAM RATING		
Offense	Defense	Overall
75	84	82

The 2001-2002 Detroit Pistons are a team that succeeds with its defense, and this year's edition should be no different. Ben Wallace, along with second-team NBA All-Defense Michael Curry and Clifford Robinson, made most Piston games low-scoring affairs. For Detroit to win, the game usually has to be low-scoring, because their offensive weapons are limited. Jerry Stackhouse leads the Piston scorers, however, his shooting percentage is quite low (.397). A lot of Stackhouse's points come from the charity stripe after driving the basket and drawing the foul. Jon Barry is the Piston's best outside shooter – he hit 121 three point shots last season. Other offensive options include Cliff Robinson, NBA Sixth Man of the Year Corliss Williamson, and Chucky Atkins. The Pistons also picked up free agent Chauncey Billups to add some scoring and run the point.

Take over the Piston franchise if you get more excited by blocked shots and defensive stuffs than long range jumpers. The Pistons aren't a very good catch-up team, and they're not going to blow out many opponents.

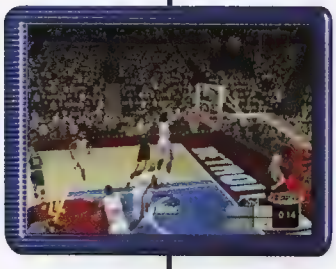
Starting Lineup	2K3 Rating	2K2 Rating	+/-	Key Stat
Chauncey Billups	77	72	+5	Averaged 12.5 ppg in starting role for Minn
Jerry Stackhouse	85	90	-5	Ranked 4th in NBA in free throws made
Michael Curry	70	75	-5	Shot .453 from floor
Clifford Robinson	77	88	-11	Second leading scorer with 14.6 ppg
Ben Wallace	85	89	-4	Top shotblocker and rebounder in NBA

Key Additions	Position	From
Chauncey Billups	G	Minnesota

Off Season Subtractions	Position	To
None		

Draft Recap	School	The Skinny
None		

Big Ratings Changes:	Change	The Skinny
Chauncey Billups	Up 5	Dished out 450 assists to lead Minn last year
Clifford Robinson	Down 10	Scoring down for 2nd straight year, limited rebounding ability



Star Player

Jermaine O'Neal - F-C:

An 18-year-old Jermaine O'Neal was drafted by the Portland Trailblazers in 1996, but until he joined the Indiana Pacers in 2000, he was only known for being the youngest player in the history of the NBA. After four seasons of little output with the Blazers, O'Neal started to make his mark with his new team. This past season, O'Neal became one of the most dominating post players in the league, contributing 19 points, 10.5 rebounds, and 2.3 blocks per game. He was voted the NBA's most improved player last season, and at the ripe old age of 24 seems ready to lead the Pacers to lofty heights.

NBA 2K3 Ratings

Jermaine O'Neal

Overall	Close	Medium	3pt	FT	Layup	Dunk	Handle	Pass	PostOffense
86	97	73	50	69	80	85	60	50	88
Post Def	**Block**	**Steal**	**OffReb**	**DefReb**	**Speed**	**Stamina**	**Durability**	**Def Aw**	**Off Aware**
88	90	50	80	86	65	92	80	80	80

Indiana Pacers—Central Division

Team Capsule

TEAM RATING		
Offense	Defense	Overall
84	86	84

The Indiana Pacers are a team on the rise. After a fairly ho-hum first half, a multi-player trade with the Chicago Bulls brought them an infusion of new life in the guise of center Brad Miller, forwards Ron Artest and Ron Mercer and guard Kevin Ollie. The Pacers reeled off five straight wins to end the season and squeak into the playoffs, then took eventual eastern finalist New Jersey to the wall, losing in overtime in the fifth and final game.

The return of Al Harrington from knee surgery and another year of experience for point guard Jamaal Tinsley and forward star in the making Jermaine O'Neal has them thinking about a deeper run in the playoffs this season.

The Pacers are a fairly balanced team to play in NBA 2K3. They finished in the middle of the pack in most team stat categories, but that fact is deceptive because they are much better in many categories since the trade with the Bulls. They are an excellent rebounding team, but a little weak shooting from the perimeter, with the aging Reggie Miller being the only reasonable choice to shoot from beyond the arc. However, O'Neal, Mercer, Brad Miller and Al Harrington can all put the ball in the bucket from inside the key.

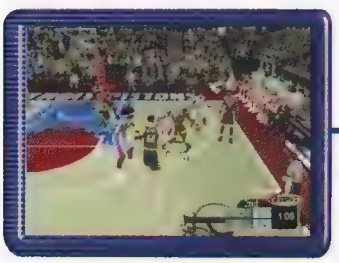
Starting Lineup	2K3 Rating	2K2 Rating	+/-	Key Stat
Jamaal Tinsley	74	79	-5	8.1 assists per game, 6th best in NBA
Reggie Miller	81	84	-3	#4 in NBA in 3 pointers made
Ron Artest	76	81	-5	Led Pacers with 141 steals
Jermaine O'Neal	86	90	-4	569 def. boards one short of IND record
Brad Miller	76	81	-5	621 rebounds, 2nd on team

Key Additions	Position	From
None		

Off Season Subtractions	Position	To
None		

Draft Recap	School	The Skinny
Fred Jones (14)	Oregon	Another shooting guard to back up Reggie Miller

Big Ratings Changes:	Change	The Skinny
None		



Star Player

Ray Allen - SG:

Allen is an extremely productive shooter who averages close to 20 points a game for his career. He was ranked #1 in three-point field goals made last season (229) and #2 in three-point field goal attempts. He also won the 1-800-Call-ATT Shootout at last year's NBA All-Star Game. And despite all these accomplishments on the court, Allen might be best known for an off-the-court one - playing the lead role of Jesus Shuttlesworth, the top high school basketball player in America, in Spike Lee's film, "He Got Game", which stars Denzel Washington as Allen's father.

NBA 2K3 Ratings

Ray Allen

Overall	Close	Medium	3pt	FT	Layup	Dunk	Handle	Pass	PostOffense
91	97	96	95	87	90	85	85	60	70
Post Def	**Block**	**Steal**	**OffReb**	**DefReb**	**Speed**	**Stamina**	**Durability**	**Def Aw**	**Off Aware**
65	50	65	50	65	85	95	90	75	80

Milwaukee Bucks—Central Division

Team Capsule

TEAM RATING		
Offense	Defense	Overall
81	74	76

After reaching the conference finals two years ago, last year's Bucks took a step backwards – and that's why they now have a decidedly different look. After eight seasons with the team, the Big Dog, Glenn Robinson, has been sent packing to the Atlanta Hawks, in exchange for Toni Kukoc, Leon Smith and a first round draft choice. The move of Robinson opens up an opportunity for Tim Thomas and other young players such as Darvin Ham to contribute more.

The bulk of the Buck offense will come from a stellar backcourt led by Ray Allen and Sam Cassell. Both are unselfish scorers (as witnessed in their combining for over 10 assists per game). Michael Redd also contributes off the bench, having averaged 11.4 and 3.3 rebounds per game in during his second season in the league.

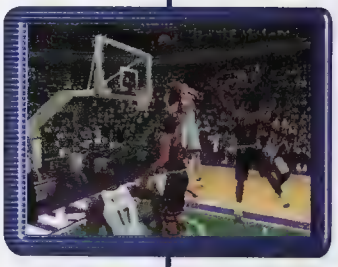
Starting Lineup	2K3 Rating	2K2 Rating	+/-	Key Stat
Sam Cassell	84	84	E	2nd in the NBA in assists per game (9.0)
Ray Allen	91	91	E	Hit 229 three-pointers last season
Tim Thomas	80	81	-1	Averaged 11.7 ppg
Anthony Mason	77	83	-6	Led Bucks with 646 rebounds
Joel Przybilla	59	70	-11	Blocked 118 shots in limited minutes

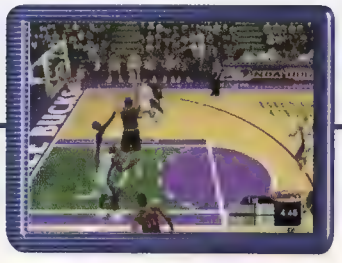
Key Additions	Position	From
Toni Kukoc	F	Atlanta

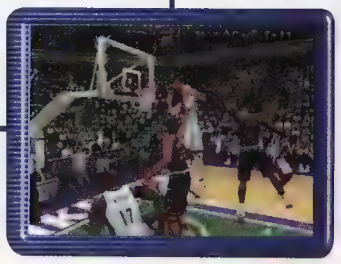
Off Season Subtractions	Position	To
Glenn Robinson	F	Atlanta
Chris Owens	F	Memphis

Draft Recap	School	The Skinny
Marcus Haislip (13)	Tennessee	Inside player not expected to contribute much this year

Big Ratings Changes:	Change	The Skinny
Joel Przybilla	Down 11	Just a role player for Bucks







Liam Kyle/NBAE/Getty Images

Star Player

Baron Davis - PG:

Davis is an excellent point guard who can score, much like one of his favorite NBA players, Isaiah Thomas. Davis averaged 18.1 points and 8.5 assists per game (4th in NBA) last year to lead the Hornets to a second place finish in the Central Division. He's also a strong defender and quite a talented ball thief, swiping 172 last year, good for second in the NBA.

NBA 2K3 Ratings

Baron Davis

Overall	Close	Medium	3pt	FT	Layup	Dunk	Handle	Pass	PostOffense
93	97	81	83	60	90	80	90	90	65
Post Def	**Block**	**Steal**	**OffReb**	**DefReb**	**Speed**	**Stamina**	**Durability**	**Def Aw**	**Off Aware**
65	55	90	62	70	90	99	90	85	90

New Orleans Hornets—Central Division

Team Capsule

TEAM RATING		
Offense	Defense	Overall
85	84	85

The big news for the Hornets this Summer was their move from Charlotte to New Orleans, becoming the first NBA team in the Big Easy since the Jazz left town in 1977. Despite the upheaval, the Hornets put together a solid 44 win season and made it to the second round of the NBA Playoffs before losing to New Jersey 4-1.

While the Hornets did not have any draft picks this year, their new fan base is enthusiastic about the team's chances this coming season. Leading scorer Jamal Mashburn should be healthy and ready to go at the beginning of the season, and the acquisition of shooting guard Courtney Alexander from the Washington Wizards finally gives the team the big guard they've been searching for since Bobby Phills' untimely death two years ago.

The Hornets are a solid choice in NBA 2K3's franchise mode. They are one of the best defensive teams in the NBA and know how to hit the boards. They have two top scorers in Davis and Mashburn, along with several quality role-players such as PJ Brown, Elden Campbell and the improving Jamaal Magloire.

Starting Lineup	2K3 Rating	2K2 Rating	+/-	Key Stat
Baron Davis	93	90	+3	Assist to turnover ratio almost 3-1
David Wesley	71	84	-13	3rd leading scorer on team
Jamal Mashburn	84	83	+1	Leading scorer with 21.5 ppg
PJ Brown	73	78	-5	Led team with 786 rebounds
Elden Campbell	78	85	-7	13.9 ppg and 137 blocks

Key Additions	Position	From
Courtney Alexander	G	Washington

Off Season Subtractions	Position	To
None		

Draft Recap	School	The Skinny
No Picks		

Big Ratings Changes:	Change	The Skinny
David Wesley	Down 13	Saw scoring average drop from 17.2 to 14.2 ppg
Baron Davis	Up 3	Ascending to superstar status

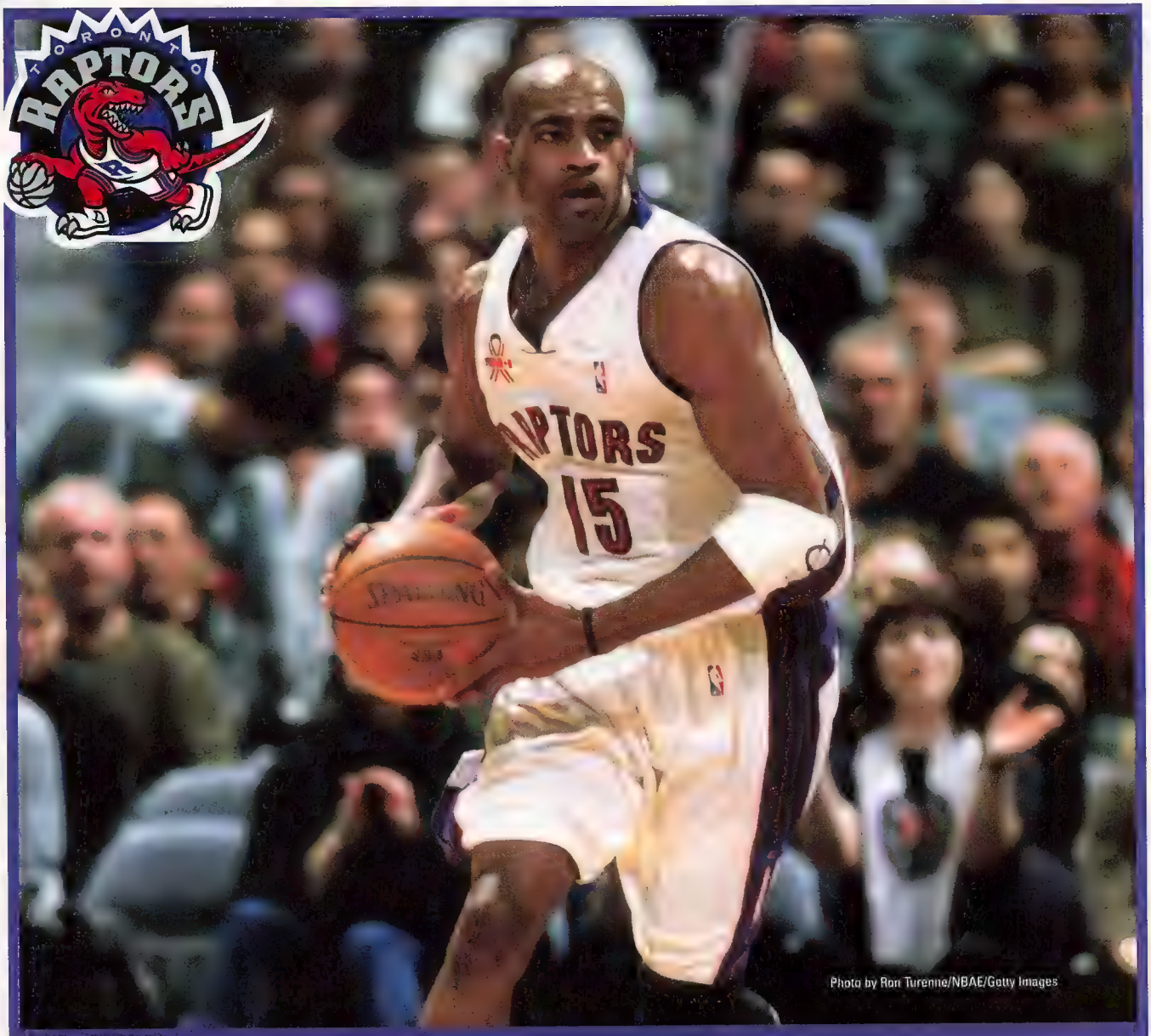


Photo by Ron Turenne/NBAE/Getty Images

Star Player

Vince Carter - SG:

Vince Carter, once again, was the leading vote getter for last season's All-Star Game. His high-flying style and ability to score from anywhere makes him a fan favorite. He is also one of the best dunkers in the NBA. Carter is extremely tough to guard because he can hit his shot from anywhere; however, his field goal percentage dropped significantly this year.

NBA 2K3 Ratings

Vince Carter

Overall	Close	Medium	3pt	FT	Layup	Dunk	Handle	Pass	PostOffense
90	97	84	86	79	90	90	90	65	75
Post Def	**Block**	**Steal**	**OffReb**	**DefReb**	**Speed**	**Stamina**	**Durability**	**Def Aw**	**Off Aware**
70	70	80	65	75	85	99	80	70	85

Toronto Raptors—Central Division

Team Capsule

TEAM RATING		
Offense	Defense	Overall
75	87	76

The Toronto Raptors were 30-38 heading into the last couple weeks of last season, then lost Vince Carter, who represented the bulk of their offense. You can learn a lot about a team's character when its back is against the wall, but what happened to the Toronto Raptors after Vince Carter went down couldn't have been imagined by even their most ardent fans. They started winning – a lot. The Raptors reeled off 12 victories in 14 games to finish with 42 wins and a playoff spot. They didn't make it out of the first round (although they took Detroit to the five game limit) but they discovered other sources of offense during their winning streak.

Players like Morris Peterson and Antonio Davis are solid offensive options that complement the high-flying Carter, and Dell Curry is still a deadly sniper from the outside. However, as it has been the past four seasons, most things are keyed by Carter's explosive scoring, and the teams aggressive defense (4th in points allowed, 8th in steals).

The Raptors acquired Lindsey Hunter from the Lakers to provide them some depth at the point guard position, but gave up a solid bench contributor in Tracy Murray. They also lost one of their most important extras, Keon Clark, as a free agent to the Sacramento Kings.

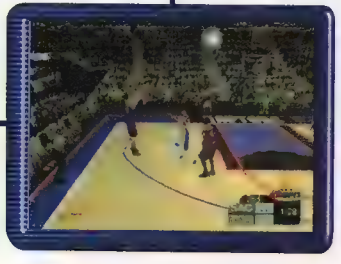
Starting Lineup	2K3 Rating	2K2 Rating	+/-	Key Stat
Alvin Williams	72	76	-4	Averaged 11.8 ppg
Vince Carter	90	90	E	Missed 22 games with knee injury
Morris Peterson	76	81	-5	Third on team in scoring (14 ppg)
Antonio Davis	79	87	-8	8th in NBA for offensive boards
Hakeem Olajuwon	69	88	-17	7.1 ppg and 6.0 rebounds a game

Key Additions	Position	From
Lindsey Hunter	PG	LA Lakers

Off Season Subtractions	Position	To
Keon Clark	F/C	Sacramento
Tracy Murray	F	LA Lakers
Chris Childs	G	NJ

Draft Recap	School	The Skinny
None		

Big Ratings Changes:	Change	The Skinny
Hakeem Olajuwon	Down 17	Fading fast



Dallas Mavericks

Star Player

Dirk Nowitzki - F-C:
Nowitzki continued his ascent to superstardom this past season, raising his scoring average another couple points to a team leading 23.4. Dirk is an anomaly – a big man with incredible shooting ability, even from three-point range. If you're controlling Nowitzki in NBA 2K3, you should feel comfortable launching a shot from just about anywhere.

NBA 2K3 Ratings

Dirk Nowitzki

Overall	Close	Medium	3pt	FT	Layup	Dunk	Handle	Pass	PostOffense
91	97	94	91	83	85	80	85	55	85
Post Def	Block	Steal	OffReb	DefReb	Speed	Stamina	Durability	Def Aw	Off Aware
75	75	70	70	90	75	95	90	75	80

Dallas Mavericks—Midwest Division

Team Capsule

TEAM RATING		
Offense	Defense	Overall
98	72	94

The Mavs are the NBA's regular season version of the high-scoring All-Star squads - all offense, no defense. The Mavericks have a pretty simple gameplan – score more points than their opponent. And that plan worked for much of last season, when the Mavs were the highest scoring team in the NBA and won 57 games. However, come playoff time, offense alone is not enough, and Dallas was bounced out by the Sacramento Kings in the second round.

The 2002-2003 edition of the Dallas Mavericks greatly resembles the previous year's one. They re-signed their key mid-season acquisition, Raef LaFrentz, and only lost reserve guard Greg Buckner to free agency.

Running the Maverick franchise is a blast if you like run and gun style offenses. Point guard Steve Nash can move the ball up the court very quickly, and once he is within range of the basket, can pop the long distance jumper or dish the ball to a number of excellent offensive options, including team leading scorer Dirk Nowitzki, forward Michael Finley, or center LaFrentz, who, like Nowitzki, has incredible range for a big man. On defense, your best bet is to take control of one of the Mavericks' shot-blocking trees, LaFrentz or 7'6" Shawn Bradley, and try to send your opponent's shot back in his face.

Starting Lineup	2K3 Rating	2K2 Rating	+/-	Key Stat
Steve Nash	83	85	-2	Ranked 9th in NBA in assists
Michael Finley	86	89	-3	Averaged over 20 ppg for third year in a row
Adrian Griffin	69	73	-4	Shot .499 from the field
Dirk Nowitzki	91	94	-3	Hit 139 3-pointers last season
Raef LaFrentz	78	83	-5	Led team with 213 blocked shots

Key Additions	Position	From
None		

Off Season Subtractions	Position	To
Greg Buckner	G	Philadelphia

Draft Recap	School	The Skinny
None		

Big Ratings Changes:	Change	The Skinny
None		

Photo by Brian Bahr/NBAE/Getty Images

Star Player

Marcus Camby - F/C:

Camby is an intimidating presence in the paint, swatting away opponents' shots and ripping down rebounds. The downside to Camby is a history of injury problems – he has yet to play more than 63 games in a season, and last year he played a career low 29. He also isn't much of a contributor on offensive. However, there are few better in the post on defense, and his addition to the Nuggets dramatically improves them in that category.

NBA 2K3 Ratings

Marcus Camby

Overall	Close	Medium	3pt	FT	Layup	Dunk	Handle	Pass	PostOffense
77	70	50	50	67	70	75	55	50	80
Post Def	**Block**	**Steal**	**OffReb**	**DefReb**	**Speed**	**Stamina**	**Durability**	**Def Aw**	**Off Aware**
90	80	70	82	90	65	84	60	80	70

Denver Nuggets—Midwest Division

Team Capsule

TEAM RATING		
Offense	Defense	Overall
60	74	60

It's been a long time since the Denver Nuggets were considered respectable. They haven't had a winning season since 1993-94 and last season had to win three of their last four games to finish a paltry 27-55. With nowhere to go but up, GM Kiki Vandeweghe made some radical moves. Starting around mid-season of last year, he shipped off what little talent the Nuggets possessed – sending Nick Van Exel and Raef LaFrentz to Dallas, then during the off-season, dealt star forward Antonio McDyess to the NY Knicks. When the dust cleared, the Nuggets were sitting on plenty of salary cap room, an excellent young rebounder/shot-blocker in Marcus Camby, two foreign prospects with a ton of upside (Nikoloz Tskitishvili and Maybyner Hilario) and potentially three first round picks in 2003.

The future seems bright for the Nuggets, but as someone playing NBA 2K3, you're only concerned about their present. Running the Nugget team is one of the ultimate challenges in the game. Howard is a reasonable offensive option in the post, and Tskitishvili and Lenard are decent options to hit the three. You can also occasionally drive the lane with Jackson for the easy lay-up. But make no mistake; you have to be extremely well-skilled to have any success with this team.

Starting Lineup	2K3 Rating	2K2 Rating	+/-	Key Stat
Mark Jackson	70	73	-3	605 assists for Knicks last year
James Posey	70	82	-12	114 steals led the Nuggets
George McCloud	67	67	E	Field goal % on steady decline last 4 yrs
Juwan Howard	77	80	-3	Denver's scoring leader at 14.6 ppg
Marcus Camby	77	86	-9	322 rebounds and 50 blocks in 29 games

Key Additions	Position	From
Mark Jackson	G	NY
Marcus Camby	F-C	NY
Don Reid	F	Orlando

Off Season Subtractions	Position	To
Antonio McDyess	F	NY
Calbert Cheaney	F	Utah

Draft Recap	School	The Skinny
Nikoloz Tskitishvili (5)	Republic of Georgia	7 ft forward 5th pick in NBA Draft
Maybyner Hilario (7)	Brazil	Could be the steal of the McDyess trade

Big Ratings Changes:	Change	The Skinny
James Posey	Down 12	Shot a woeful .376 from the field, poor even for the Nuggets

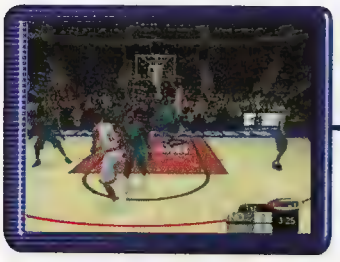


Photo by Glenn James/NBAE/Getty Images

Star Player

Steve Francis - PG:

Francis is a prolific scorer who only needs to improve his shot selection to rise to the next level (a knock Toronto's Vince Carter has also received). He has good range and is a masterful dunker. For the third straight year, Francis has raised his points per game total, although this season there was a noticeable drop in his field goal percentage. Francis contributes 6.4 assists per game from his point position and is also the Rockets second leading rebounder with a 7.0 per game average.

NBA 2K3 Ratings

Steve Francis

Overall	Close	Medium	3pt	FT	Layup	Dunk	Handle	Pass	PostOffense
86	97	81	82	79	85	90	90	80	65
Post Def	**Block**	**Steal**	**OffReb**	**DefReb**	**Speed**	**Stamina**	**Durability**	**Def Aw**	**Off Aware**
65	55	75	66	78	90	99	80	75	85

Houston Rockets—Midwest Division

Team Capsule

TEAM RATING		
Offense	Defense	Overall
71	71	71

"With the number one pick in the 2002 NBA Draft, the Houston Rockets select... Yao Ming, 7'5" center from China."

Whether they're bad or good this year one thing about the Rockets is certain this season – they will be noticed. Adding a 7-foot plus center to your line-up usually will get people to pay attention. The fact that this athletic giant is from China only makes the story that much more interesting.

Even if the Rockets had not named Yao Ming, as their pick, it would be expected that they improve last year's 28 win disappointment. Power forward Maurice Taylor, who missed all of last season after Achilles tendon surgery, is expected back. Veteran guard Glen Rice also will return. Add to that the cadre of young scorers they have already in Steve Francis, Cutino Mobley, Kenny Thomas and Eddie Griffin, and you have the makings of a team with a future.

If you're playing as the Rockets you won't see Yao on their roster. Due to his late signing of an NBA contract, Yao won't appear until NBA 2K4. However, with NBA 2K3's incredibly deep Create-a-Player option, you should have no trouble creating a reasonable Yao substitute.

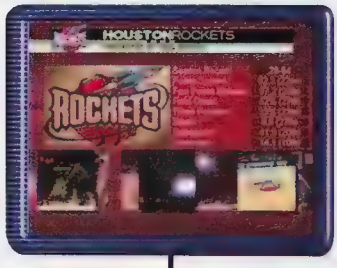
Starting Lineup	2K3 Rating	2K2 Rating	+/-	Key Stat
Steve Francis	86	91	-5	Hit 149 3 pointers to lead team
Cuttino Mobley	84	87	-3	Leading scorer with 21.7 ppg
Glen Rice	68	74	-6	Missed 62 games with knee surgery
Maurice Taylor	69	74	-5	13 ppg and 5.5 rebounds during 2000-01
Kelvin Cato	59	70	-11	He's no Yao

Key Additions	Position	From
None		

Off Season Subtractions	Position	To
Kevin Willis	C	San Antonio

Draft Recap	School	The Skinny
Bostjan Nachbar (15)	Slovenia	6'8" Slovenian should make an immediate impact

Big Ratings Changes:	Change	The Skinny
Kelvin Cato	Down 11	Yao penalty



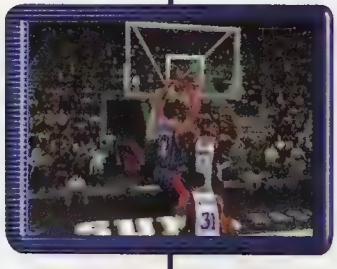


Photo by Fernando Medina/NBAE/Getty Images

Star Player

Pau Gasol - F:

22 year old Spanish import Pau Gasol came to the Grizzlies along with Lorezen Wright and Brevin Knight in a deal with the Atlanta Hawks for superstar Shareef Abdur-Rahim. At the time, many NBA followers must have been scratching their heads, but after a solid rookie season, the trade doesn't look so one-sided any more.

Gasol ranked 4th in field goal percentage (.518) and 6th in blocks (169) last season. He averaged 17.6 ppg and pulled down almost 9 rebounds a game to earn NBA Rookie-of-the-Year honors. Gasol is a reliable scorer from short range in the post, but don't count on him to knock down too many 15-footers.

NBA 2K3 Ratings

Pau Gasol

Overall	Close	Medium	3pt	FT	Layup	Dunk	Handle	Pass	PostOffense
82	94	66	50	71	70	75	75	65	85
Post Def	**Block**	**Steal**	**OffReb**	**DefReb**	**Speed**	**Stamina**	**Durability**	**Def Aw**	**Off Aware**
75	85	50	84	86	70	90	90	80	70

Memphis Grizzlies—Midwest Division

Team Capsule

TEAM RATING		
Offense	Defense	Overall
77	85	77

The Grizzlies added two building blocks for the future last year in 7'0" Spaniard Pau Gasol, and Duke graduate Shane Battier. However this off-season's acquisition may prove to be the key to their rise in NBA stature. No, we're not talking about draft pick Drew Gooden of Kansas (although he has a good chance to pay dividends almost immediately), we're talking about Jerry West joining the Grizzlies as their new team president.

After a Hall-of-Fame NBA playing career, West built the Laker dynasty of the 80's that continues to dominate today. Put West in the front office of a team that dumbly traded away Mike Bibby and there's reason to hope in Memphis.

Of course, West can't affect the fortunes of this franchise in NBA 2K3. That challenging job is up to you if you choose to run this team. The Grizzlies have the beginnings of a decent nucleus, but you're looking at three good offseasons in franchise mode before this team will challenge for a playoff spot.

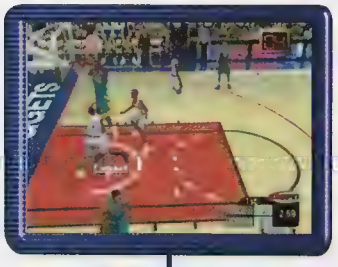
Starting Lineup	2K3 Rating	2K2 Rating	+/-	Key Stat
Jason Williams	78	83	-5	519 assists, but 214 turnovers also
Shane Battier	77	83	-6	Led team with 215 steals
Drew Gooden	74	NA	NA	4th pick in 2002 NBA Draft
Pau Gasol	81	79	+2	Shot a stellar .551 to lead team
Lorenzen Wright	75	85	-10	405 rebounds in only 43 games

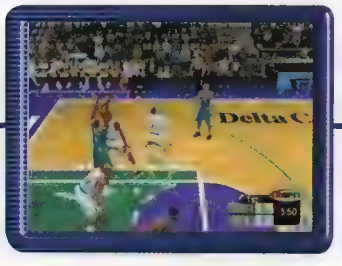
Key Additions	Position	From
Wesley Person	G	Cleveland
Earl Watson	G	Seattle

Off Season Subtractions	Position	To
Nick Anderson	G-F	Cleveland

Draft Recap	School	The Skinny
Drew Gooden (4)	Kansas	Should help team's low post offense and rebounding
Robert Archibald (32)	Illinois	Another big man to help on the boards

Big Ratings Changes:	Change	The Skinny
Pau Gasol	+2	The 7'0" forward from Spain proved to be a steal of the 2001 draft
Lorenzen Wright	-10	Only played in 43 games last season





Minnesota Timberwolves

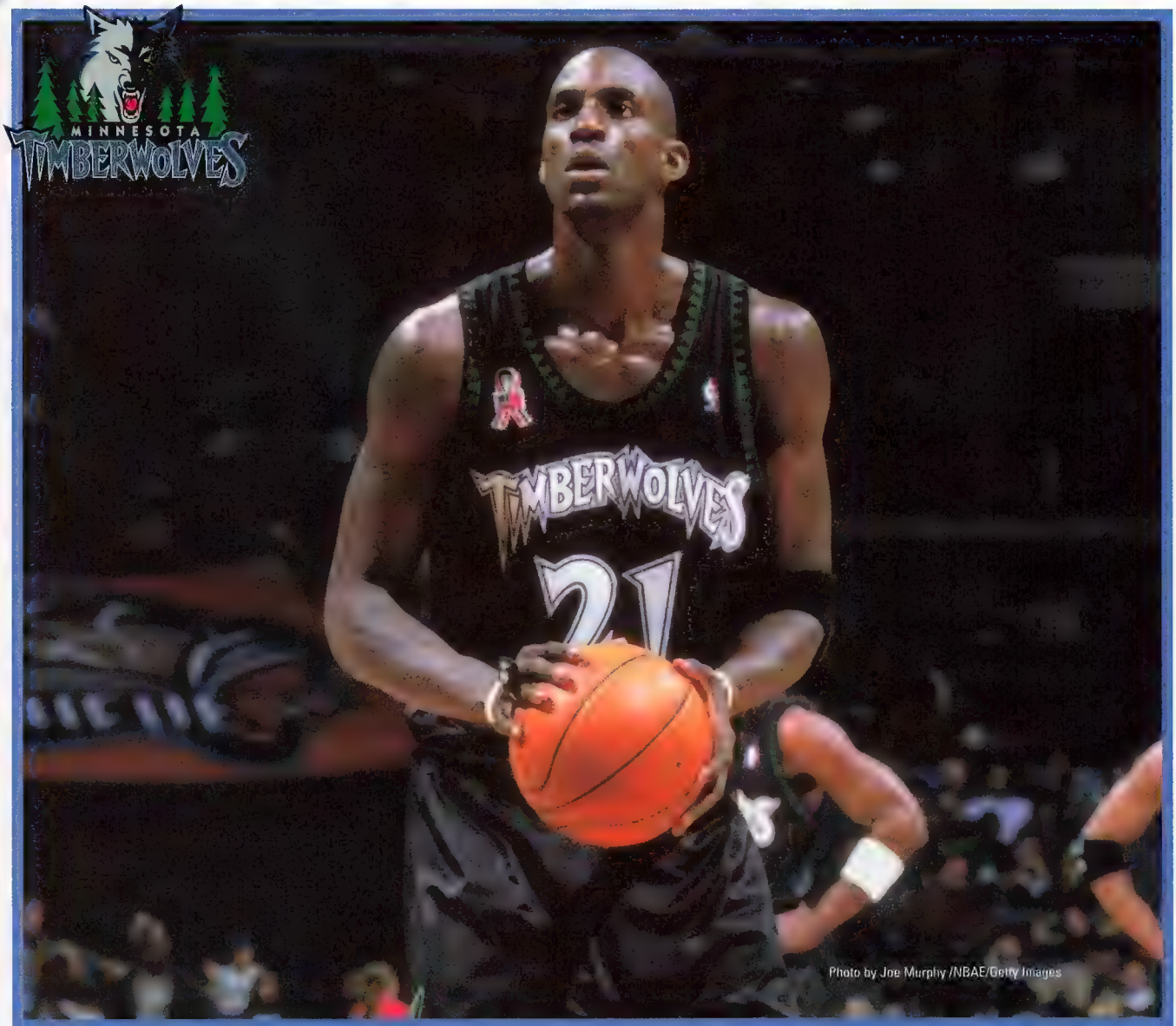


Photo by Joe Murphy /NBAE/Getty Images

Star Player

Kevin Garnett - PF:

Much like Allan Iverson or Tim Duncan, the addition of Kevin Garnett to the Timberwolves turned them into instant winners. Garnett averaged 21.2 points per game last year, and also chipped in 5.2 assists and 12.1 rebounds (third in the NBA). Garnett is excellent in the post, both offensively and defensively, and will dominate almost any defender down low, except maybe Shaq or Tim Duncan.

NBA 2K3 Ratings

Kevin Garnett

Overall	Close	Medium	3pt	FT	Layup	Dunk	Handle	Pass	PostOffense
94	97	75	71	77	85	90	80	65	94
Post Def	**Block**	**Steal**	**OffReb**	**DefReb**	**Speed**	**Stamina**	**Durability**	**Def Aw**	**Off Aware**
90	80	65	88	94	70	99	90	85	85

Minnesota Timberwolves—Midwest Division

Team Capsule

TEAM RATING		
Offense	Defense	Overall
83	71	77

Depending on who you ask, the Minnesota Timberwolves are either a franchise with a great tradition of winning that are going to make some noise in the Midwest Division and playoffs this year, or they are a franchise stuck in park who can only head downward as their competition gets better.

The Timberwolves are definitely a winning franchise – they logged another 50 win season, good for a third-place finish in their division. They also bowed out of the first round of the playoffs for the sixth year in a row. The Wolves are very much like one of their division rivals, the Spurs, in that all their fortunes are tied to one great player. In the case of the Wolves, that player is Kevin Garnett. Like Tim Duncan on the Spurs, Garnett is so dominant, he probably improves the Wolves' record by 10-15 wins. However, without a good supporting cast, he can't get the team to the next plateau. The championship Bulls were big winners because of Jordan AND Pippen, the current day Lakers have won because of Kobe AND Shaq. Kevin Garnett needs an equally talented partner to bring Minnesota a title... or at least get them to the second round of the playoffs.

Playing as the Timberwolves is a lot like playing the Spurs. You run most of your plays through your franchise player, Garnett, who is dangerous from anywhere in the post. If your opponent doubles up on Garnett, you can pass the ball back outside to Wally Szcerbiak, who is an excellent outside shooter – especially from beyond the arc.

Starting Lineup	2K3 Rating	2K2 Rating	+/-	Key Stat
Terrell Brandon	77	84	-7	Only played 32 games due to injury
Wally Szczerbiak	79	85	-6	4th in 3pt field goal percentage in NBA
Kevin Garnett	94	98	-4	Ranked 2nd in NBA in double-doubles
Joe Smith	74	81	-7	Shot a team high .511 from field
Radoslav Nesterovic	65	72	-7	Pulled down 534 rebounds, 2nd on team

Key Additions	Position	From
Troy Hudson	G	Orlando

Off Season Subtractions	Position	To
Chauncey Billups	PG	Detroit
Sam Mitchell	F	Retirement

Draft Recap	School	The Skinny
None		

Big Ratings Changes:	Change	The Skinny
None		

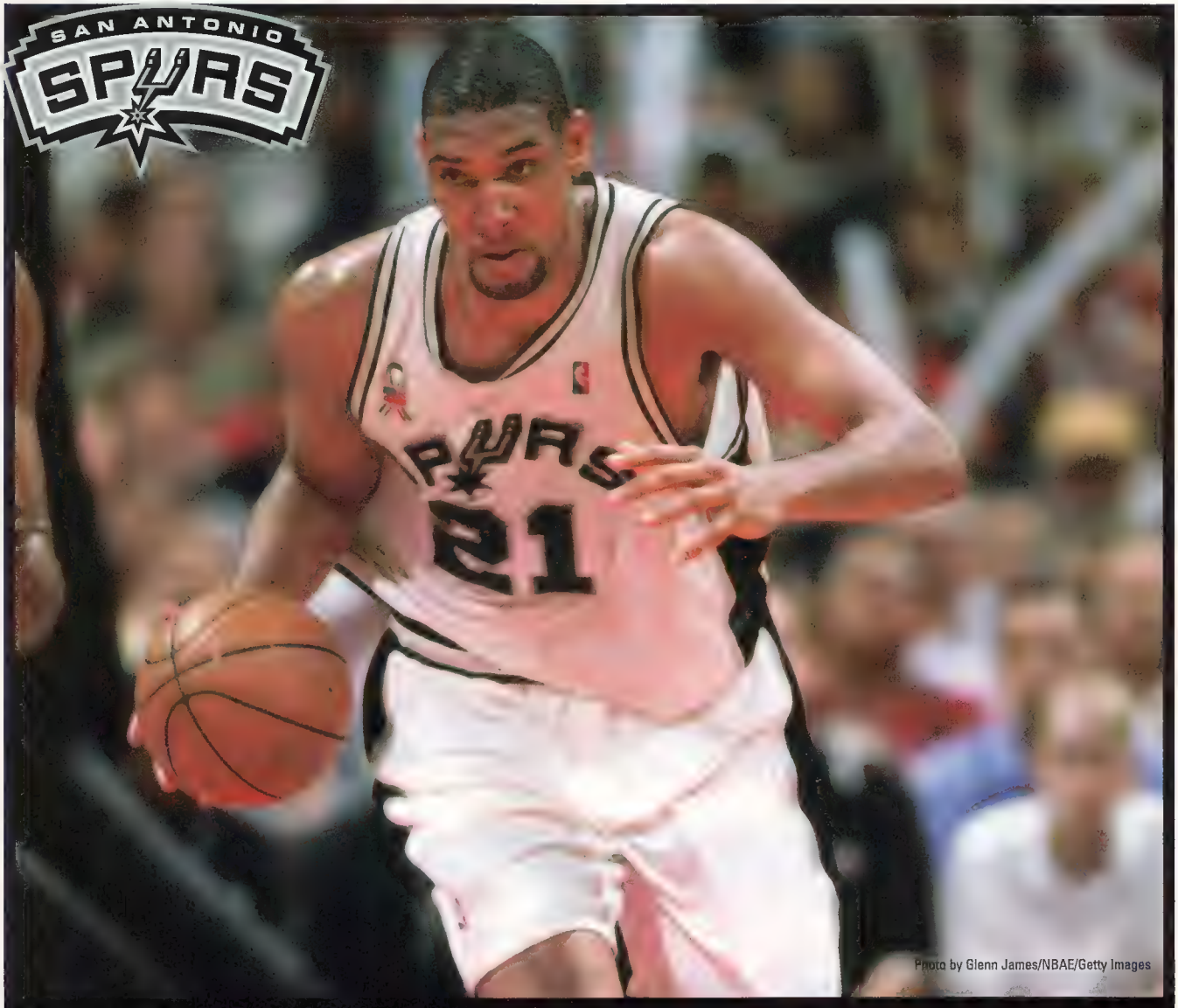


Photo by Glenn James/NBAE/Getty Images

Star Player

Tim Duncan - PF:

Duncan was last year's league MVP and deservedly so. Without Duncan, the Spurs would be near the Midwest Division basement – instead they won another title with the second best record in the NBA (tied with the Lakers). Duncan scored a career high 25.5 ppg on 50.8% shooting. He averaged 12.7 rebounds and chipped in 3.3 assists and 2.5 blocks per game. In NBA 2K3, just like in real life, Duncan is the ultimate inside force on both ends of the court. He'll keep your opponent from driving the paint, and on the offensive end, most of the Spurs' plays will revolve around getting him the ball somewhere near the paint.

NBA 2K3 Ratings

Tim Duncan

Overall	Close	Medium	3pt	FT	Layup	Dunk	Handle	Pass	PostOffense
96	97	75	52	62	80	80	60	50	95
Post Def	**Block**	**Steal**	**OffReb**	**DefReb**	**Speed**	**Stamina**	**Durability**	**Def Aw**	**Off Aware**
95	90	60	90	94	70	99	90	90	85

San Antonio Spurs — Midwest Division

Team Capsule

TEAM RATING		
Offense	Defense	Overall
80	89	80

The arrival of Tim Duncan in 1998 turned the San Antonio Spurs into perennial favorites to win the Midwest Division. However, the winds of change are blowing in Texas this year, as the other Spurs tower, David Robinson, prepares to hang up his sneakers after the season, and Duncan becomes a free agent.

Most of the Spurs' offensive plays are geared around Duncan, and occasionally Robinson. When running the Spurs on offense, your goal is to get the ball down low to one of the towers, preferably Duncan. Duncan can back his defender down, or drive around him for an emphatic slam. However, if Duncan or Robinson get bottled up, the Spurs do have some good long distance shooters in Steve Smith, who led the NBA in 3 point field goal percentage, and Tony Parker, that the ball can be kicked out to.

On defense, the Spurs total dominance in the paint forces most opponents to keep their offense out on the perimeter – this helped the Spurs finish 3rd in points allowed. They don't have any real good ball thieves, so your best bet is to keep control of Duncan down near the paint, going for the blocked shot when the opportunity arises, or pulling down the rebound off your opponent's miss.

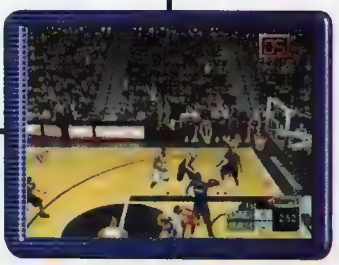
Starting Lineup	2K3 Rating	2K2 Rating	+/-	Key Stat
Tony Parker	70	75	-5	Led team with 339 assists and 89 steals
Steve Smith	73	82	-9	Team's best 3 point option (.472)
Bruce Bowen	73	83	-10	Great defender, not a threat on offense
Tim Duncan	96	97	-1	1042 rebounds, most in NBA last year
David Robinson	78	87	-9	140 blocked shots in 78 games

Key Additions	Position	From
Craig "Speedy" Claxton	G	Philadelphia
Kevin Willis	C	Houston
Erick Barkley	G	Portland
Steve Kerr	G	Portland

Off Season Subtractions	Position	To
Charles Smith	G	Portland
Terry Porter	G	Retirement
Antonio Daniels	G	Portland
Mark Bryant	F	Philadelphia

Draft Recap	School	The Skinny
None		

Big Ratings Changes:	Change	The Skinny
Bruce Bowen	Down 10	Horrible shooting percentage from field hurts rating
David Robinson	Down 9	Injuries and age have caught up with the Admiral



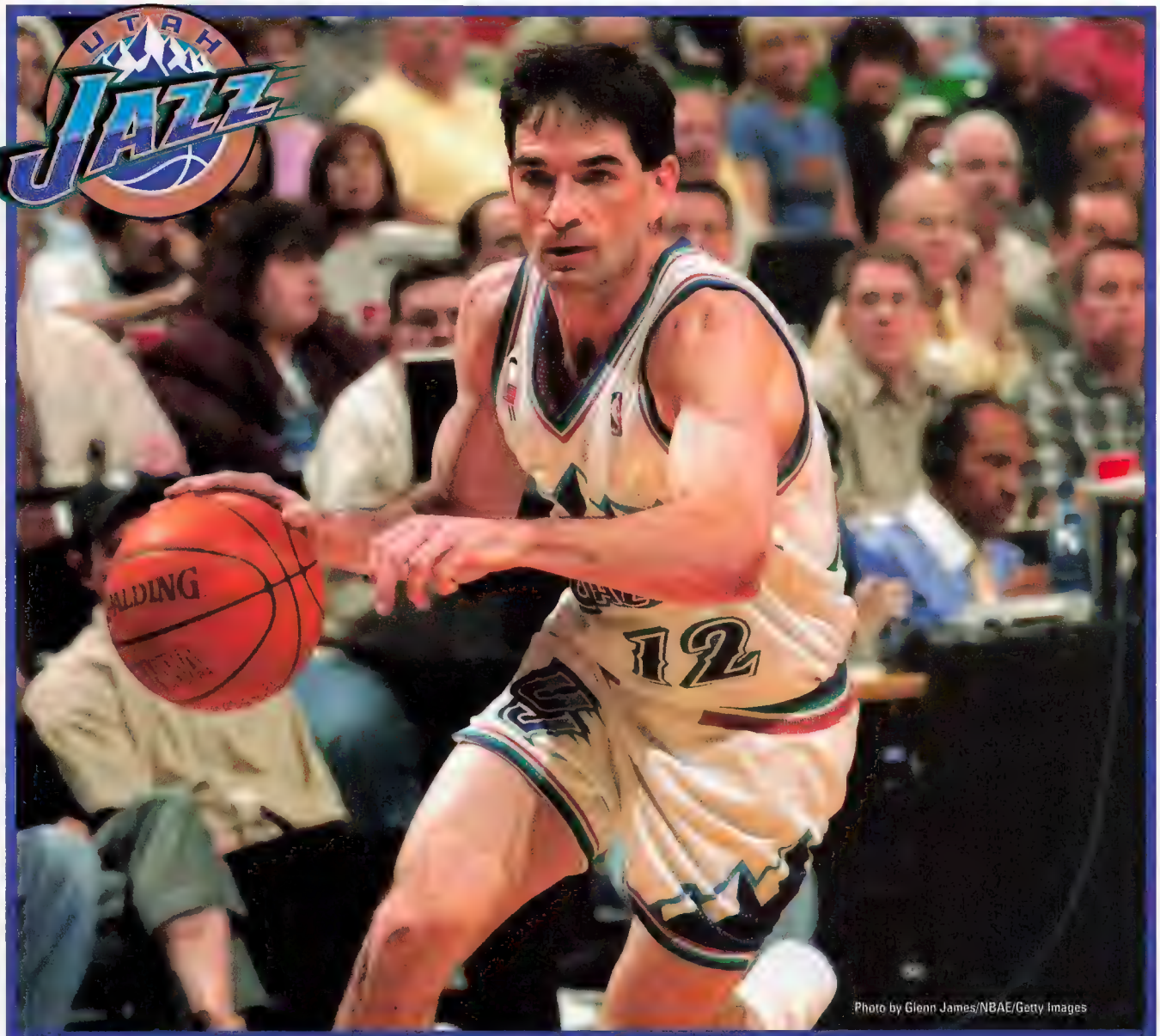


Photo by Glenn James/NBAE/Getty Images

Star Player

John Stockton - PG:

Stockton may be the best playmaker to have ever played in the NBA. Even at 40, he has continued to produce at the highest level, averaging 13.4 points, 8.2 assists and 1.9 steals per game last season. For the third consecutive year Stockton played in all 82 Jazz games, and in fact, his minute total even increased over the previous two years.

NBA 2K3 Ratings

John Stockton

Overall	Close	Medium	3pt	FT	Layup	Dunk	Handle	Pass	PostOffense
85	97	81	75	86	80	50	85	90	55
Post Def	**Block**	**Steal**	**OffReb**	**DefReb**	**Speed**	**Stamina**	**Durability**	**Def Aw**	**Off Aware**
60	50	75	50	50	80	94	90	90	95

Utah Jazz—Midwest Division

Team Capsule

TEAM RATING		
Offense	Defense	Overall
72	68	68

Stockton to Malone. Can you think of any phrase that better epitomizes Utah Jazz basketball? For 16 seasons, that combination has been the key to Jazz basketball success, but that combination is about to come to an end. Both future Hall-of-Famers are nearing the ends of their illustrious careers, and if you live in the Salt Lake City area I'm sure you've seen the want ads: "Wanted: Young talented point guard and power forward, good pay, six-month work year, some travel."

The sad thing for Jazz fans is not so much that Malone and Stockton will be hanging up their Nikes soon... that was inevitable. No, what is truly disappointing is that Jazz management have clung to their two NBA icons for so long that they have delayed the rebuilding process that all good teams must go through eventually.

The Jazz seem to be a team ready to live in the basement of the Midwest for a while. They replaced their second leading scorer, Donyell Marshall, with two other forwards, Matt Harpring and Calbert Cheaney. Neither addition will really improve the Jazz's outlook for this season and beyond. They also added a young center, Stanford's Curtis Borchardt, who will either be a steal or a bust, based on whether he can stay healthy (Borchardt has had foot injuries much of his college career).

If you are going to play the Jazz, you know what to do on offense – Stockton to Malone... at least for one more year anyway.

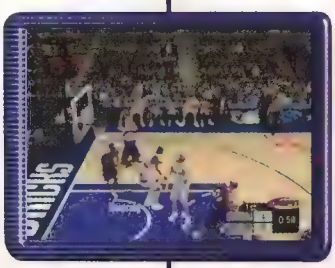
Starting Lineup	2K3 Rating	2K2 Rating	+/-	Key Stat
John Stockton	85	83	+2	674 assists and 152 steals
Matt Harpring	76	80	-4	2nd on Sixers in rebounds with 573
Andrei Kirilenko	73	73	E	Led Jazz in blocks with 159
Karl Malone	84	86	-2	Leading scorer and rebounder (again)
Jarron Collins	62	NA	NA	Averaged 6.4 ppg in first season

Key Additions	Position	From
Matt Harping	F	Philadelphia
Calbert Cheaney	F	Denver

Off Season Subtractions	Position	To
Donyell Marshall	F	Chicago

Draft Recap	School	The Skinny
Curtis Borchardt (18)	Stanford	Can be defensive presence in middle if he can stay healthy

Big Ratings Changes:	Change	The Skinny
John Stockton	Up 2	Logs more minutes than previous two seasons



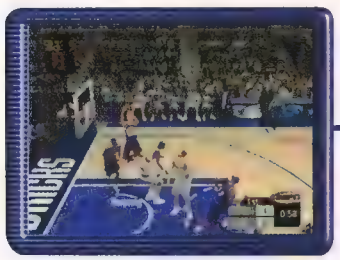


Photo by William Sallaz/NBAE/Getty Ima

Star Player

Antawn Jamison - PF:

Jamison is best known as the guy that the Warriors traded Vince Carter for. While Carter may put more people in the seats, the Warriors didn't exactly get the short end of the deal. Jamison can stick a jumper from any range and has some decent moves in the post. He is also a good offensive rebounder, but only average defensively. Jamison's biggest problem is he is a bit undersized for a power forward, especially when compared to other Pacific Division PFs such as Elton Brand, Rasheed Wallace, and Chris Webber.

NBA 2K3 Ratings

Antawn Jamison

Overall	Close	Medium	3pt	FT	Layup	Dunk	Handle	Pass	PostOffense
82	94	81	80	72	80	75	75	50	80
Post Def	**Block**	**Steal**	**OffReb**	**DefReb**	**Speed**	**Stamina**	**Durability**	**Def Aw**	**Off Aware**
70	70	55	90	78	75	95	70	65	75

Golden State Warriors—Pacific Division

Team Capsule

TEAM RATING		
Offense	Defense	Overall
72	65	70

The 2001-2003 edition of the Golden State Warriors improved by 4 games on their previous year's record. Unfortunately those additional 4 wins got them to 21- good enough for Blackjack but still about 20 shy if they want to go to the playoffs. What their 21 wins also got them was another high pick in the NBA Draft – which they converted into guard-forward Mike Dunleavy from Duke. The Warriors' ineptitude these past couple seasons have translated into a solid nucleus to build around – Dunleavy will join established star Antawn Jamison, Gilbert Arenas, Troy Murphy, Jiri Welsch, Steve Logan, and budding superstar Jason Richardson.

Playing as the Warriors in NBA 2K3 is not as painful as one might think. They are an excellent rebounding team – first in the NBA last year – although cynics might chalk that up to their many misfires on offense. They also finished 7th in the NBA in points scored – there are plenty of players who can shoot the ball. The Warriors' biggest problem is defense, so if you take the helm of this team, you're going to have to work extra hard on that end of the floor to stay competitive.

Starting Lineup	2K3 Rating	2K2 Rating	+/-	Key Stat
Gilbert Arenas	76	NA	NA	Took over point and excelled
Jason Richardson	79	74	+5	Second leading scorer on GS with 14.4 ppg
Mike Dunleavy	76	NA	NA	Should improve GS outside shooting
Antawn Jamison	82	87	-5	Lead scorer at 19.7 ppg
Adonal Foyle	64	74	-10	Excellent shot blocker, rejected 168

Key Additions	Position	From
None		

Off Season Subtractions	Position	To
Larry Hughes	G	Washington

Draft Recap	School	The Skinny
Mike Dunleavy Jr. (3)	Duke	#3 pick in the NBA Draft, talented outside shooter
Jiri Welsch (16)	Czech Republic	Acquired from Philadelphia, a versatile point or off-guard

Big Ratings Changes:	Change	The Skinny
Jason Richardson	Up 5	A true rising star and the NBA 2K3 motion capture model
Adonal Foyle	Down 10	Contributed on rebounds and blocks, but no threat on offense

TEAM PROFILE

Photo by Fernando Medina/NBAE/Getty Images

Star Player

Elton Brand - F-C:

The Clippers acquired Elton Brand from the Chicago Bulls for a high price – the #2 pick in the NBA Draft. But after a season of watching Brand assume the role of the Clip's de facto leader, you have to wonder what the Bulls were thinking. Brand is the kind of player you want to build your team around.

Brand is a rebounding monster, on both the defensive and offensive boards. He has great moves in the paint and is almost automatic from close range – last year Brand shot a stellar .527 from the floor. Now that they've added one of the NBA's best playmakers in Andre Miller, that should make Brand that much more dangerous this coming season.

NBA 2K3 Ratings

Elton Brand

Overall	Close	Medium	3pt	FT	Layup	Dunk	Handle	Pass	PostOffense
89	97	70	50	80	75	75	75	55	90
Post Def	**Block**	**Steal**	**OffReb**	**DefReb**	**Speed**	**Stamina**	**Durability**	**Def Aw**	**Off Aware**
85	85	60	94	90	65	94	90	85	85

Los Angeles Clippers—Pacific Division

Team Capsule

TEAM RATING		
Offense	Defense	Overall
87	84	86

The Los Angeles Clippers may not have the Championship rings of their cross-town rivals, the Lakers, but there are many that think they now possess more talent. Sacrilege you say? With the acquisition of one of the finest point guards in the NBA, Andre Miller, the Clippers now have top talent at every starting position. Years of losing records have allowed the Clippers to stockpile top young talent such as Corey Maggette, Michael Olowokandi, Quentin Richardson, Lamar Odom, and Kenyon Dooling. Front office cleverness got them the last two key pieces to the puzzle – Elton Brand and Andre Miller.

The Clippers have assembled a line-up to make a strong run during the 2002-03 NBA season. However, we're talking the Clippers here, so there are caveats to their potential success. If the Olowokandi contract negotiations don't distract and IF Lamar Odom stays on the court for most of the season and IF Andre Miller jells well with his new team the Clippers are set to make a lot of noise this coming season. Of course, the nice thing about NBA 2K3 is none of those factors will affect how you do with this team – so take them out to the hardwood with confidence.

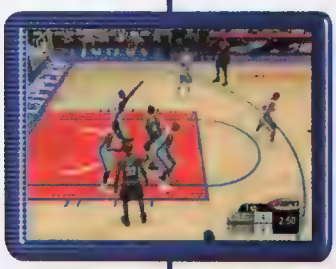
Starting Lineup	2K3 Rating	2K2 Rating	+/-	Key Stat
Andre Miller	87	87	E	Led the NBA in assists
Eric Piatkowski	71	70	+1	The team's leading free throw shooter at .894
Lamar Odom	80	89	-9	Only played in 29 games last year
Elton Brand	89	93	-4	Led team with 18.2 ppg and 925 rebounds
Michael Olowokandi	73	73	E	145 blocks and 11.2 ppg

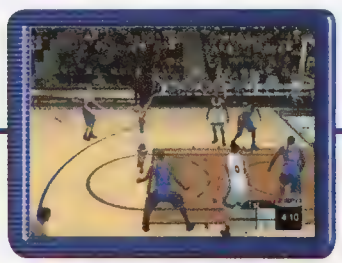
Key Additions	Position	From
Andre Miller	PG	Cleveland
Bryant Stith	G-F	Cleveland

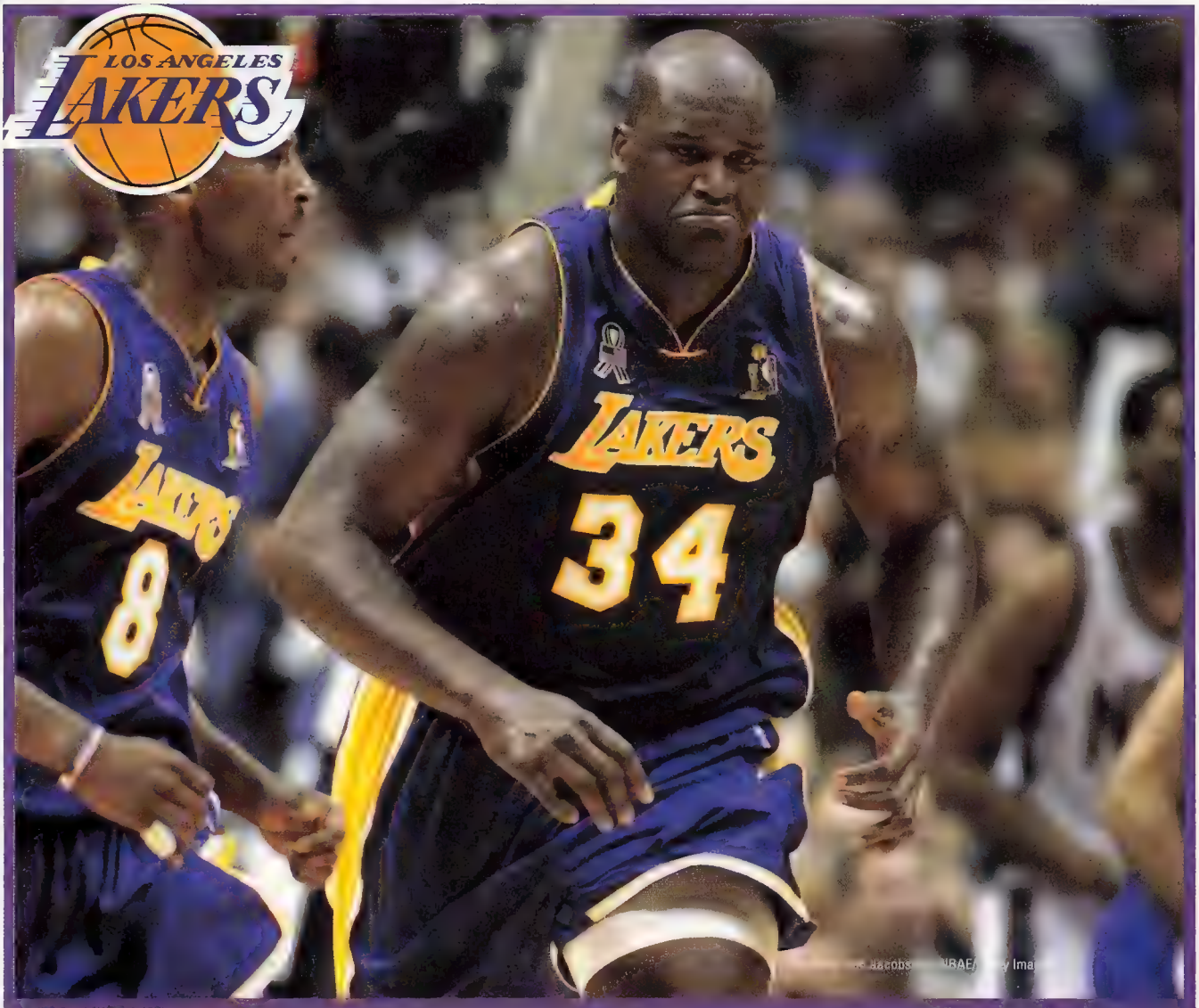
Off Season Subtractions	Position	To
Darius Miles	F	Cleveland
Harold Jamison	F	Cleveland
Jeff McInnis	G	Portland

Draft Recap	School	The Skinny
Chris Wilcox (8)	Maryland	Should be a nice backup for Elton Brand

Big Ratings Changes:	Change	The Skinny
Lamar Odom	Down 9	Drug suspension and injury cost Odom most of his season







Star Player

Shaquille O'Neal - C:

It was once written that Shaq would be in the CBA if he was four inches shorter. While it is true that you can't teach "tall," there is much more to Shaq's game than his 7 foot height. He has become an excellent passer, allowing the Lakers to run coach Phil Jackson's triangle offense quite successfully. He also has improved his free throw shooting enough to no longer be a punchline on late night talk shows. But what Shaq does better than any other player in the NBA is dominate in the post both on the offensive and defensive ends of the court. Shaq has a Post Offense rating of 99 and a Post Defense rating of 94 in NBA 2K3 – and it doesn't get much better than that.

NBA 2K3 Ratings

Shaquille O'Neal

Overall	Close	Medium	3pt	FT	Layup	Dunk	Handle	Pass	PostOffense
98	97	58	50	50	80	85	65	65	99
Post Def	**Block**	**Steal**	**OffReb**	**DefReb**	**Speed**	**Stamina**	**Durability**	**Def Aw**	**Off Aware**
94	90	50	96	92	65	96	80	85	90

Los Angeles Lakers—Pacific Division

Team Capsule

TEAM RATING		
Offense	Defense	Overall
95	90	93

One of the great sports dynasties of our time, the world champion Los Angeles Lakers are one of the most dominant franchises in any sport. It's no great mystery why the Lakers are so powerful – they have two of the greatest NBA players in history in their starting five.

Shaquille O'Neal and Kobe Bryant make all the other Lakers' games much better by commanding so much attention on the defensive end. The constant double-teaming they regularly see opens up shots for Derek Fisher, Rick Fox, Robert Horry and whatever other spare parts the Lakers have on the floor.

The Lakers are a great team to start with when you're learning NBA 2K3 because you can literally play a two-man game on offense, alternating between driving the lane or hitting the outside shot with Kobe or dumping the ball to Shaq in the paint and having him back down his defender. When you get a little more experienced, you can expand the Lakers' attack by executing their triangle offense – passing the ball to Shaq in the high post and kicking it back out when he's double-teamed.

Starting Lineup	2K3 Rating	2K2 Rating	+/-	Key Stat
Derek Fisher	71	80	-9	Led Lakers in three-point shots with 144
Kobe Bryant	96	96	E	Assist and steal leader, 2nd leading scorer
Rick Fox	74	82	-8	Averaged 7.9 ppg
Samaki Walker	69	73	-4	2nd in rebounds on Lakers with 481
Shaquille O'Neal	98	99	-1	40 double-doubles last yr, 1st in NBA in FG%

Key Additions	Position	From
Tracy Murray	F	Toronto
AJ Guyton	G	Chicago

Off Season Subtractions	Position	To
Lindsey Hunter	G	Toronto

Draft Recap	School	The Skinny
Kareem Rush (20)	Missouri	Acquired in draft day deal with Toronto

Big Ratings Changes:	Change	The Skinny
Derek Fisher	Down 9	Rated too high in NBA 2K2, this score much more accurate

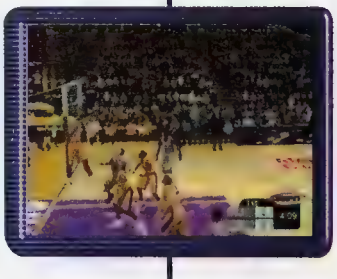


Photo by Barry Gossage/NBAE/Getty Images

Star Player

Shawn Marion - F:

When you lead your team in rebounds and blocked shots – traditional "big man" stat categories – that's either a testament to how poor your team's front court is or how talented you are. In the case of Shawn Marion, both statements are true. The Suns frontcourt doesn't contribute much to the offense or rebounding; this team is really about shooting from the outside. And Marion, at 6'7", is an amazing athlete who can sky for the ball off the glass. He is one of the NBA's most spectacular dunkers and can consistently hit the medium range jumpshot.

NBA 2K3 Ratings

Shawn Marion

Overall	Close	Medium	3pt	FT	Layup	Dunk	Handle	Pass	PostOffense
90	94	83	80	81	85	95	75	50	85
Post Def	**Block**	**Steal**	**OffReb**	**DefReb**	**Speed**	**Stamina**	**Durability**	**Def Aw**	**Off Aware**
80	75	75	86	90	75	99	80	85	80

Phoenix Suns—Pacific Division

Team Capsule

TEAM RATING		
Offense	Defense	Overall
75	77	76

It was clear after last season that the Phoenix Suns ended up on the short end of the trade that sent point guard Jason Kidd to the New Jersey Nets for Stephon Marbury. Marbury certainly is a talented scorer that can get hot and carry a team. Kidd, however, makes everyone around him better – as evident from the dramatic turnaround of the Nets.

Not to put all the Sun's problems on Marbury, the Suns also are in serious need of some big men, and tried to address that problem through the draft and free agency during the off-season. Veteran forward-center Scott Williams joined the team from Denver, and the team drafted 6'10" high schooler Amare Stoudamire with their 9th pick in the first round of the NBA Draft. Williams should help on the boards immediately; Stoudamire has tremendous upside but will be a project.

To be successful as the Phoenix Suns, you need to get Marbury or Marion open in the paint. Most of their key offensive plays are designed to isolate them so they can breakdown one defender with a crossover move or get some space for an open outside shot. You should note that Marion is the only Sun with a decent three-point shot, so don't go launching bombs with any of the Sun guards.

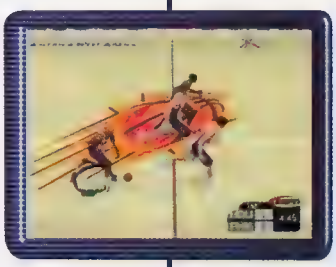
Starting Lineup	2K3 Rating	2K2 Rating	+/-	Key Stat
Stephon Marbury	86	90	-4	Led team with 666 assists and 20.4 ppg
Anfernee Hardaway	77	86	-9	12.0 ppg last year is 5.6 below career avg
Shawn Marion	90	92	-2	Leads team in rebounds, steals, and blocks
Tom Gugliotta	68	74	-6	Only 6.5 ppg last year
Jake Tsakalidis	64	68	-4	Not a very good FT shooter (.698)

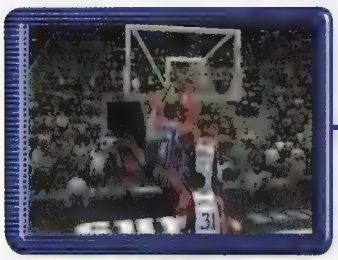
Key Additions	Position	From
Scott Williams	C	Denver

Off Season Subtractions	Position	To
Dan Majerle	F	Retirement

Draft Recap	School	The Skinny
Amare Stoudemire (9)	Cypress Creek HS	6'10" high schooler has a load of talent, but won't help for a while
Casey Jacobsen (22)	Stanford	Stellar outside shooter will help

Big Ratings Changes:	Change	The Skinny
Anfernee Hardaway	Down 9	Scoring average dropped precipitously since knee injury in 2000





Portland Trail Blazers

Star Player

Rasheed Wallace - PF:
An NBA freak, and we mean that in a good way. Wallace is a dominating inside post player who also is the team's most reliable three-point threat. Like many of the Blazers, Wallace is an excellent rebounder – pulling down 645 rebounds last year, just a few shy of team leader Dale Davis. Wallace has received more than his share of technical fouls, but that won't handicap you in NBA 2K3 – digital players tend to keep their cool no matter what the situation.

NBA 2K3 Ratings

Rasheed Wallace

Overall	Close	Medium	3pt	FT	Layup	Dunk	Handle	Pass	PostOffense
87	97	75	83	73	70	80	70	50	90
Post Def	**Block**	**Steal**	**OffReb**	**DefReb**	**Speed**	**Stamina**	**Durability**	**Def Aw**	**Off Aware**
80	82	62	78	86	70	90	90	80	80

Portland Trailblazers—Pacific Division

Team Capsule

TEAM RATING		
Offense	Defense	Overall
89	84	88

Pity the poor Portland Trailblazers. They seemingly have as much talent as anyone in a very talented Pacific Division, but over the past few years have fallen behind the LA Lakers, and now, the Sacramento Kings. Although the Blazers tend to struggle against their nemesis, the LA Lakers, you might have better luck at the controls in NBA 2K3. Running the 2K3 version of the Blazers gives you plenty of scoring options, both in the starting line-up and from one of the deepest benches in the NBA. Rasheed Wallace has a stellar inside-outside game and is the Blazers main weapon when he isn't being benched for a technical foul. The Blazers also feature five other double-figure scorers: Bonzi Wells, Damon Stoudamire, Ruben Patterson, Derek Anderson, and future Hall-of-Famer, Scottie Pippen.

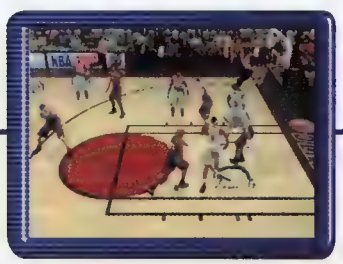
Starting Lineup	2K3 Rating	2K2 Rating	+/-	Key Stat
Damon Stoudamire	79	81	-2	Led team with 6.5 assists per game
Bonzi Wells	83	83	E	Led team with 113 steals, 2nd leading scorer at 17 ppg
Scottie Pippen	81	82	-1	Had almost as many assists per game as Stoudamire
Rasheed Wallace	87	93	-6	Inside force with a three-point shot
Dale Davis	72	84	-12	Led team in rebounding with 8.8 per game

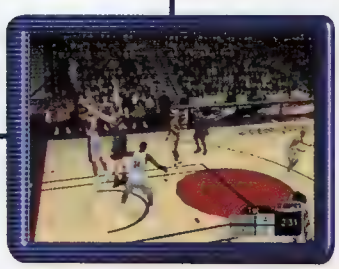
Key Additions	Position	From
Antonio Daniels	G	San Antonio
Jeff McInnis	C	LA Clippers

Off Season Subtractions	Position	To
Erick Barkley	G	San Antonio
Steve Kerr	G	San Antonio

Draft Recap	School	The Skinny
Qyntel Woods (21)	NE Miss CC	Talented forward that fell out of lottery

Big Ratings Changes:	Change	The Skinny
Dale Davis	Down 11	Davis is no longer counted on for scoring, only rebounding





Star Player

Chris Webber - PF:

Chris Webber was heralded as a savior for the Golden State Warriors when they gave up Penny Hardaway and a bushel of first round picks to get him in 1993. A year and a half later, he was shipped off to Washington for Tom Gugliotta and another bushel of first round picks. After a couple years in Washington, he was sent to Sacramento for Mitch Richmond and Otis Thorpe (no bushel of picks this time), and then, he was home.

Chalk it up to maturity or perhaps the low-key surroundings of Sacramento, but the day Chris Weber slipped on a King uniform was the day his ascension to NBA superstardom truly began. Weber is the key cog in a championship caliber basketball machine. He is the King's leading scorer, has the highest shooting percentage among starters, and also contributes 4.8 assists per game, along with a couple blocks and steals.

NBA 2K3 Ratings

Chris Webber

Overall	Close	Medium	3pt	FT	Layup	Dunk	Handle	Pass	PostOffense
91	97	75	54	75	85	80	70	85	95
Post Def	Block	Steal	OffReb	DefReb	Speed	Stamina	Durability	Def Aw	Off Aware
85	78	70	82	92	70	99	70	75	85

Sacramento Kings — Pacific Division

Team Capsule

TEAM RATING		
Offense	Defense	Overall
98	95	95

The Sacramento Kings took the Lakers to the wire before bowing out of the playoffs last year. It was obvious from their back-and-forth series that the only thing that seems to be preventing the Kings from getting the Laker monkey off their back was confidence. Talent-wise, all the pieces are in place to win a championship. The 2003 Kings' starting five match up well with anyone and they upgraded an already deep bench with the addition of prize free agent forward/center Keon Clark (11.3 points, 7.4 rebounds, 1.51 blocked shots) from Toronto. The Kings are poised to dominate in the West for years to come.

Playing as the Kings in NBA 2K3 is like driving a well-tuned sports car. They have so many weapons: the inside offense of Divac and Weber, the perimeter shooting of Stojakovic, Turkoglu, Bibby, and Christie, and the solid defense and rebounding of the whole team. This is a good team to start with as you're learning to play, because their abundance of talent can compensate for your novice skill.

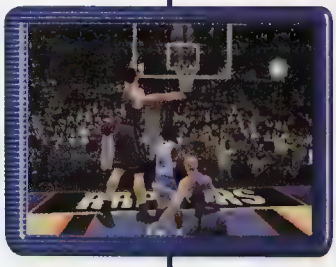
Starting Lineup	2K3 Rating	2K2 Rating	+/-	Key Stat
Mike Bibby	84	85	-1	3-to-1 assist to turnover ratio
Doug Christie	78	82	-4	Fourth in the NBA in steals
Predrag Stojakovic	85	92	-7	Shot .416 from three point range
Chris Webber	91	95	-4	24.5 ppg, 10.1 rebounds
Vlade Divac	75	86	-11	Team's leading rebounder

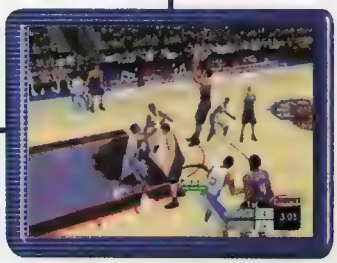
Key Additions	Position	From
Keon Clark	F-C	Toronto

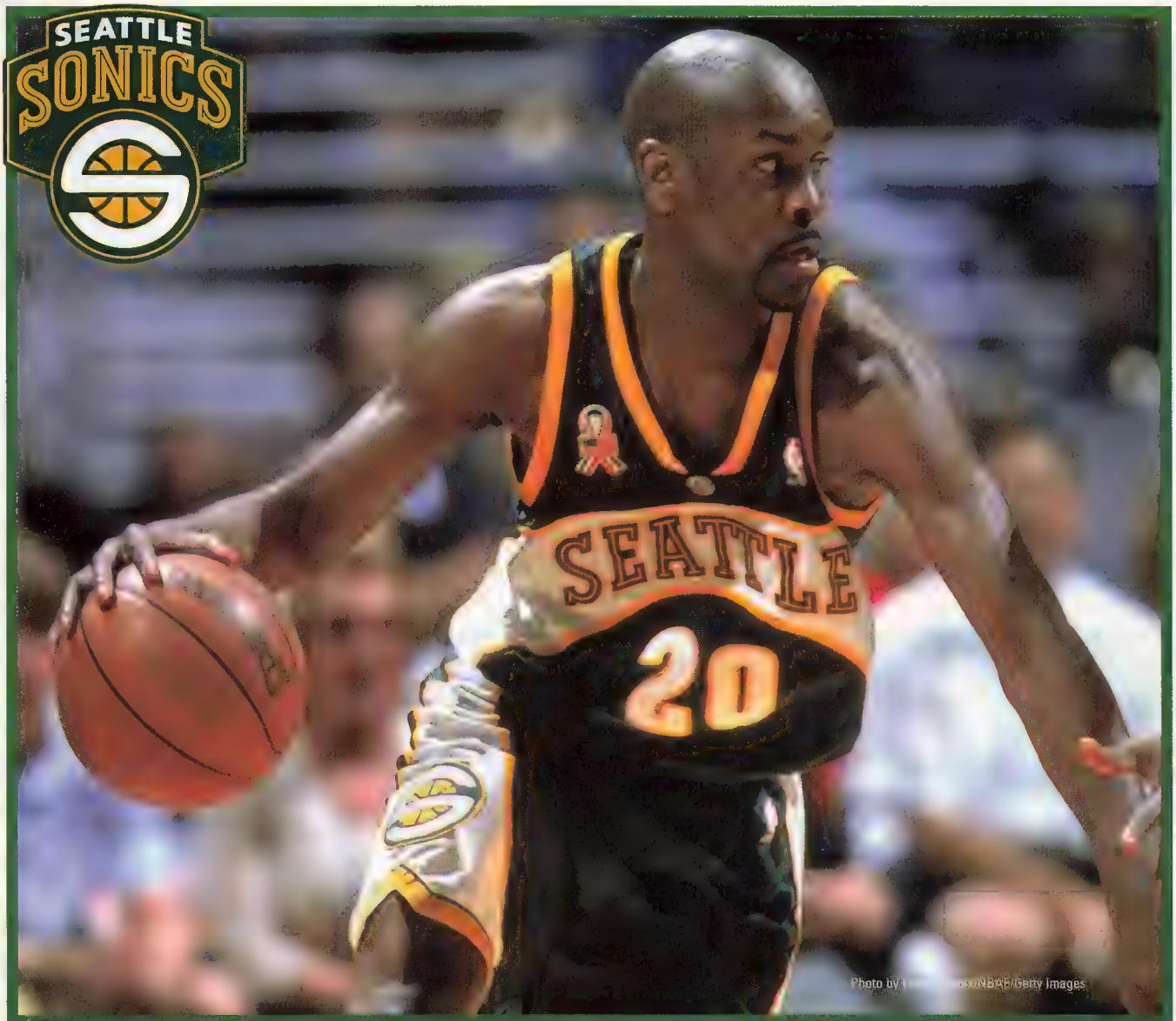
Off Season Subtractions	Position	To
None		

Draft Recap	School	The Skinny
Dan Dickau	Gonzaga	Traded to Atlanta

Big Ratings Changes:	Change	The Skinny
Vlade Divac	Down 11	Beginning to slow down, no longer amongst NBA elite centers







Star Player

Gary Payton -PG:

Gary Payton is the top scoring point guard in the NBA (22.1 ppg), as well as a stellar playmaker (3rd in assists among point guards with 737) and one of the top defenders in the league. Heading into his 12th season, he is the epitome of the player you would want running your team. He is best driving the basket or shooting from medium range, or kicking the ball to an open Brent Barry or Rashard Lewis.

NBA 2K3 Ratings

Gary Payton

Overall	Close	Medium	3pt	FT	Layup	Dunk	Handle	Pass	PostOffense
93	84	86	79	77	90	50	85	90	65
Post Def	**Block**	**Steal**	**OffReb**	**DefReb**	**Speed**	**Stamina**	**Durability**	**Def Aw**	**Off Aware**
65	60	75	60	75	85	95	90	90	90

Seattle SuperSonics—Pacific Division

Team Capsule

TEAM RATING		
Offense	Defense	Overall
86	78	86

The SuperSonics are just a notch below the Pacific Division elite teams. They don't yet have the players inside to hang with teams like the Kings and Lakers, but what they do have isn't bad. They ranked 1st in field goal percentage, 2nd in three-point shots, and 6th in total points. Additionally, they take good care of the ball (thanks to Payton), ranking 7th in turnovers.

The Sonics feature one of the best backcourts in the NBA, led by perennial all-star Gary Payton, and the much-improved Brent Barry. They have rising stars in guard-forward Rashard Lewis and Desmond Mason. Most importantly, the Sonics made moves during the off-season to address some of their weaknesses. The addition of center Vitaly Potapenko from Boston should improve Seattle's rebounding and toughen up the defense in the middle. A healthy Calvin Booth should return to help in the paint, as well.

The Sonics' offense revolves around Payton bringing the ball up, then deciding whether to drive the paint and dish the ball to Lewis or Barry, or use a screen to shake himself free for an open jumper. When Desmond Mason comes off the bench, he's another good scoring option from close range.

Starting Lineup	2K3 Rating	2K2 Rating	+/-	Key Stat
Gary Payton	93	97	-4	Top scoring point guard in NBA at 22.1 ppg
Brent Barry	82	82	E	Career high 14.4 ppg, 5.4 rebs, 5.3 assists
Rashard Lewis	84	86	-2	Rising star, 16.8 ppg and 7.0 rebounds
Vladimir Radmanovic	73	68	+5	Contributed 6.7 ppg as a rookie
Calvin Booth	59	71	-12	Out for most of season

Key Additions	Position	From
Kenny Anderson	PG	Boston
Joseph Forte	G	Boston
Vitaly Potapenko	F-C	Boston

Off Season Subtractions	Position	To
Vin Baker	F	Boston
Shammond Williams	G	Boston
Earl Watson	G	Memphis
Olumide Oyedeji	C	Orlando

Draft Recap	School	The Skinny
None		

Big Ratings Changes:	Change	The Skinny
Vladimir Radmanovic	Up 5	Shot .420 from three-point range
Calvin Booth	Down 12	Big money free agent only played in 15 games

LEGENDS
LAKERS
NEW YOR
18
NEW Y
10

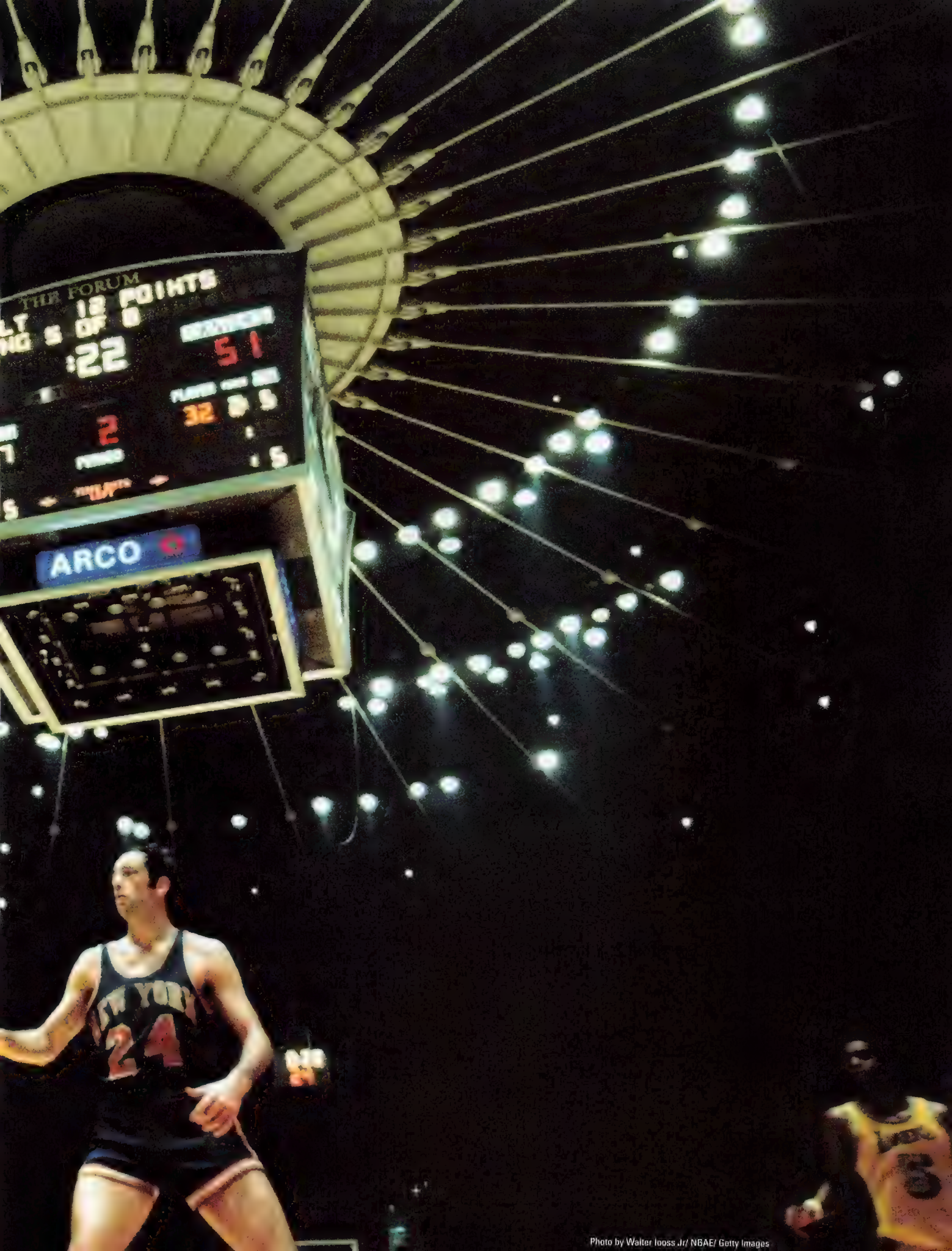


Photo by Walter Iooss Jr/ NBAE/ Getty Images

NBA Classic Team Comparisons

The NBA is a league that has a rich history full of legendary players and coaches. Half court shots, buzzers beaters, in your face dunks and plenty of memorable games and moments that have made the league one of the most exciting leagues in all of sports.

Visual Concepts and Sega Sports have carried on that proud tradition by including seven legendary teams that span five decades that you choose to play with in NBA 2K3.

Some of the players have had interesting nicknames like "Dr. J" Julius Erving, Earvin "Magic" Johnson, "Pistol" Pete Maravich, Earl "The Pearl" Monroe, "His Airness" Michael Jordan and Clyde "The Glide" Drexler.

NBA 2K3 brings those legends alive and you can select from any one of seven legendary teams one from 50's and 60's, two from 70's, 80's, 90's.

On the following pages we will break those teams down roster by roster and tell you which team is the best legendary team by simulating a tournament using all of the classic NBA teams.

Some of the players have played in different decades and as a result they have been including on two different classic teams. These players on first reference have an asterix * beside the player's name. However, their ratings remain the same between both eras.

Other players included on the 90's East and 90's West teams are still active and playing in the league and those players have a + symbol beside their name on first reference

Classic Rosters Compared

Inside the NBA 2K3 Classic Team Numbers!

50 & 60's Team top 5 NBA 2K3 Rated Players

Elgin Baylor, Small Forward (NBA 2K3 Rating 99)
Bob Cousy, Point Guard (99)
Oscar Robertson, Point Guard (99)
John Havlicek, Point Guard (98)
Bill Russell, Center (95)

70's East Legends Top 5 NBA 2K3 Rated Players

Julius Erving, Small Forward (99)
Walt Frazier, Point Guard (99)
Pete Maravich, Point Guard (99)
George Gervin, Shooting Guard (96)
Nate Archibald, Point Guard (94)

70's West Legends Top 5 NBA 2K3 Rated Players

Norm Van Lier, Point Guard (NBA 2K3 Overall Rating 99)
Jerry West, Point Guard (99)
Wilt Chamberlain, Center (98)
Lenny Wilkens, Point Guard (94)
David Thompson, Shooting Guard (93)

80's East Legends Top 5 Rated Players

Larry Bird, Small Forward (NBA 2K3 Overall Rating 99)
*+Michael Jordan, Shooting Guard (99)
Isiah Thomas, Point Guard (99)
Dominique Wilkins, Small Forward (99)
Sidney Moncrief, Shooting Guard (98)

80's West Legends Top 5 Rated Players

+Hakeem Olajuwon, Center (NBA 2K3 Overall Rating 99)
Earvin "Magic" Johnson, Point Guard (99)
*Clyde Drexler, Shooting Guard (99)
James Worthy, Small Forward (93)
Bob McAdoo, Power Forward (93)

90's East Legends Top 5 Rated Players

+Patrick Ewing, Center (NBA 2K3 Overall Rating 99)
+Grant Hill, Small Forward (95)
+Anfernee Hardaway, Shooting Guard (94)
+Alonzo Mourning, Center (93)
+Scottie Pippen, Small Forward (93)

90's West Legends Top 5 Rated Players

+ Gary Payton, Point Guard (NBA 2K3 Overall Rating 98)
+ Karl Malone, Power Forward (97)
+ John Stockton, Point Guard (97)
+ David Robinson, Center (96)
+ Shawn Kemp, Power Forward (94)

Photo by Tim DeFrisco/NBAE/Getty Images

Legends

Overall Best NBA 2K3 Legendary Players

Larry Bird, 80's East Legends (NBA 2K3 Overall Rating 99)
Michael Jordan, 80's East Legends (99)
Earvin "Magic" Johnson, 80's West Legends (99)
Julius Erving, 70's East Team Legends (99)
+Hakeem Olajuwon, 80's West Team (99)
Clyde Drexler, 80's West Legends (99)
Pete Maravich, 70's East Team Legends (99)
Oscar Robertson, 50's & 60's Legends (99)
Bob Cousy, 50's & 60's Legends (99)
Wilt Chamberlain, 70's West Legends (98)

Best Legendary Close Range Shooters

Larry Bird, 80's East Legends (NBA 2K3 Overall Rating 99)
Wilt Chamberlain, 70's West Legends (99)
Clyde Drexler, 80's West Legends (99)
Julius Erving, 70's East Team Legends (99)
Earvin "Magic" Johnson, 80's West Legends (99)
Jason Kidd, 90's West Legends (99)
Michael Jordan, 80's East Legends (99)
Pete Maravich, 70's East Legends (99)
Hakeem Olajuwon, 80's West Team (99)
Scottie Pippen, 90's East Legends (99)

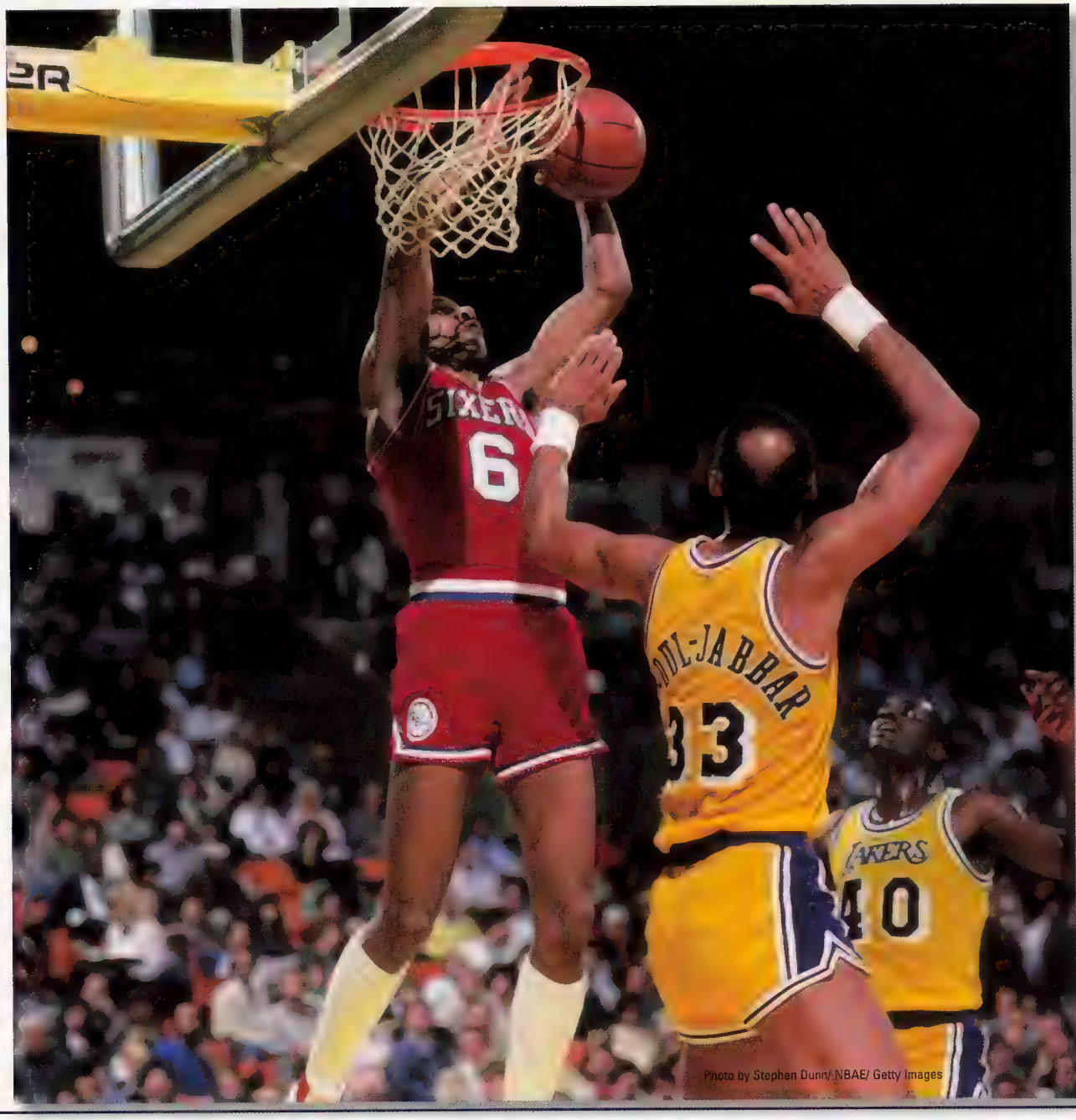


Photo by Stephen Dunn/ NBAE/ Getty Images

Best Medium Range Legends Shooters

Larry Bird, 80's East Legends (NBA 2K3 Overall Rating 97)
+Glen Rice, 90's East Legends (97)
Rick Barry, 70's West Legends (NBA 2K3 Rating 96)
Elgin Baylor, 50's & 60's Legends (96)
Michael Jordan, 80's East Legends (96)
+Reggie Miller, 90's East Legends (96)
Mitch Richmond, 90's West Legends (96)
Oscar Robertson, 50's & 60's Legends (96)
Julius Erving, 70's East Team Legends (94)
Pete Maravich, 70's East Legends (94)

Three Point Legends

Larry Bird, 80's East Legends (NBA 2K3 Overall Rating 99)
Reggie Miller, 90's East Legends (95)
Glen Rice, 90's East Legends (95)
Rick Barry, 70's West Legends (93)
+ Mitch Richmond, 90's West Legends (93)
Pete Maravich, 70's East Legends (90)
Chris Mullin, 90's West Legends (90)
Jerry West, 70's West Legends (90)
Bob Cousy, 50's & 60's Legends (88)
Oscar Robertson, 50's & 60's Legends (88)

Best Legends Lay-up Artists

Bob Cousey, 50's & 60's Legends (NBA 2K3 Rating 95)
Clyde Drexler, 80's West Legends (95)
Julius Erving, 70's East Legends (95)
George Gervin, 70's East Legends (95)
Earvin "Magic" Johnson, 80's West Legends (95)
Michael Jordan, 80's East Legends (95)
Pete Maravich, 70's East Legends (95)
Oscar Robertson, 50's & 60's Legends (95)
+ Latrell Sprewell, 90's West Legends (95)
Isiah Thomas, 80's East Legends (95)

Best Legends Free Throw Shooters

Larry Bird, 80's East Legends (NBA 2K3 Overall Rating 97)
Jack Sikma, 80's West Legends (95)
Earvin "Magic" Johnson, 80's West Legends (94)
Reggie Miller, 90's East Legends (89)
Bob Cousy, 50's & 60's Legends (88)
John Havlicek, 50's & 60's Legends (88)
Oscar Robertson, 50's & 60's Legends (88)
Dominique Wilkins, 80's East Legends (88)
Glen Rice, 90's East Legends (87)
George Gervin, 70's East Legends (84)

Top Rated Classic Slam Dunk Legends

Clyde Drexler, 80's West Legends (NBA 2K3 Rating 95)
Julius Erving, 70's East Legends (95)
Michael Jordan, 80's East Legends (95)
+ Shawn Kemp, 90's West Legends (95)
Dominique Wilkins, 80's East Legends (95)
David Thompson, 70's West Legends (90)
Elgin Baylor, 50's & 60's Legends (85)
+Grant Hill, 90's East Legends (85)
Alonzo Mourning, 90's East Legends (85)
Scottie Pippen, 90's East Legends (85)

Best Legendary Ball Handlers

Nate Archibald, 70's East Legends (NBA 2K3 Rating 95)
Isiah Thomas, 80's East Legends (95)
Bob Cousy, 50's & 60's Legends (90)
Earvin "Magic" Johnson, 80's West Legends (90)
Anfernee Hardaway, 90's East Legends (90)
Grant Hill, 90's East Legends (90)
Jason Kidd, 90's West Legends (90)
Michael Jordan, 80's East Legends (90)
+ Gary Payton, 90's West Legends (90)
+ Steve Smith, 90's East Legends (90)

Legendary Passers

Nate Archibald, 70's East Legends (NBA 2K3 Rating 95)
Bob Cousy, 50's & 60's Legends (95)
Earvin "Magic" Johnson, 80's West Legends (95)
Norm Van Lier, 70's West Legends (95)
Pete Maravich, 70's East Legends (95)
Earl Monroe, 70's East Legends (95)
John Stockton, 90's West Legends (95)
Isiah Thomas, 80's East Legends (95)
Jason Kidd, 90's West Legends (90)
Steve Smith, 90's East Legends (90)

Legendary Shot Blockers

Bill Russell, 50's & 60's Legends (NBA 2K3 Overall Rating 97)
+ Alonzo Mourning, 90's East Legends (96)
Wilt Chamberlain, 70's West Legends (95)
+ Shaquille O'Neal, 90's East Legends (93)
David Robinson, 90's West Legends (93)
Robert Parish, 80's East Legends (92)
Hakeem Olajuwon, 80's West Legends (92)
Artis Gilmore, 70's West Legends (90)
Moses Malone, 80's East Legends (90)
Nate Thurmond, 50's & 60's Legends (90)

Best Legendary Defenders

Larry Bird, 80's East Legends (NBA 2K3 Overall Rating 95)
Wilt Chamberlain, 70's West Legends (95)
Earvin "Magic" Johnson, 80's West Legends (95)
Michael Jordan, 80's East Legends (95)
Jason Kidd, 90's West Legends (95)
Sidney Moncrief, 80's East Legends (95)
*+Hakeem Olajuwon, 80's West Legends (95)
Oscar Robertson, 50's & 60's Legends (95)
Bill Russell, 50's & 60's Legends (95)
Jerry West, 70's West Legends (95)

Legendary Offensive Players

Nate Archibald, 70's East Legends (NBA 2K3 Overall Rating 95)
Larry Bird, 80's East Legends (95)
Bob Cousy, 50's & 60's Legends (95)
Walt Frazier, 70's East Legends (95)
Jason Kidd, 90's West Legends (95)
Earvin "Magic" Johnson, 80's West Legends (95)
Michael Jordan, 80's East Legends (95)
Pete Maravich, 70's East Legends (95)
Oscar Robertson, 50's & 60's Legends (95)
Isiah Thomas, 80's East Legends (95)

Classic Tournament Simulation

Have you ever wondered what would happen if you took NBA superstars from the 50's, 60's 70's, 80's, 90's and put them on seven different teams? Depending on the era in which they played, have them compete against each other.

We have done just that and we have determined that the players from each era are outstanding basketball players not just because of their stats but because of the way that Sega Sports and Visual Concepts have brought them to life in the three different versions of NBA 2K3.

Historical Showdown!

The 80's East Legends defeated the 80's West Legends in a high-flying best of five showdown, three games to two.

In this simulation Larry Bird and Clyde "The Glide" Drexler proved that they can still light things up from outside perimeter and inside the paint.

Clyde Drexler proved in this simulation why he is one of the best 50 NBA players of all time.

Calling for the pick when you are in the paint is easy, just push down on the left control stick on the PlayStation 2 and Xbox versions of the game. Once the pick is set roll around the pick and you should have a free lane to the basket. Some defenders are better than others and sometimes you will have to set more than one pick!

Earvin "Magic" Johnson is unstoppable on the inside; he can take it to the hole like no one else in NBA history.

90's East Legends Defeats 90's West Legends

In this five game series the 90's East dominated the 90's West the way the Chicago Bulls were able to make the Utah Jazz feel the agony of defeat during the 90's NBA playoff meetings. They swept them three games straight out a best-of-five series.

Michael Jordan and Shaquille O'Neal, Scottie Pippen, Patrick Ewing led the way for the 90's East team.

John Stockton and Karl Malone delivered for the West but it wasn't enough and Michael Jordan and Patrick Ewing moved on to face off against the 50's and 60's squad.

70's East Legends Defeats 70's West team

When playing with the 70's East Legends team, get the ball to Wilt Chamberlain under the low post, the guy didn't score 100 points in one game for nothing!

Try to make sure that Wilt Chamberlain and Bill Walton are on the court at the same time. These two big men are like a wall when it comes to defenders trying to penetrate the paint and trying to get to the basket.

Julius Erving and some of the classic dunksters will put on a show that will include some signature dunks from days gone by including the between the legs and out and into the bucket dunk as well as some awesome alley oops. Dishing the ball to a high rated known dunker and then hitting the shoot button again will randomly select an awesome dunk animation. You cannot control the dunks, but they are cool nonetheless!

Also you can surprise the other team by going for the three-point shot with Bill Walton, although he is a better low post player in this game and he needs to be wide open to have a chance at draining the three, he can drain it!

On the strength of the big men Wilt Chamberlain and Bill Walton 70's East moved out of the division with a dominating performance three games to two.

The old fellas can really drain the three point shots and play defense, Walton and Chamberlain in the middle are an incredible duo on the boards and in the offensive zone.

At various times in the tournament they dominated the paint!

50's & 60's Legends versus 70's East

Bill Russell and Bob Cousy and Nate Thurmond dominated for the 50's & 60's Legends while Wilt Chamberlain and Bill Walton from start to finish.

It took two three-point shots in the last two minutes by E. Baylor of the 50's & 60's team to defeat Wilt Chamberlain and Bill Walton and the rest of the 70's East team.

Bob Cousy and Elgin Baylor proved their legends as a three-point shooters they both called for picks to get open looks at the basket and when they got those looks they drained their shots.

The match-ups were classic battles in the paint and on the boards.

Lead by Michael Jordan, Tim Hardaway and Scottie Pippen, the 90's East Legends defeated the 50's & 60's Legends to win the best classic team title in our simulation three games to two in double overtime.

Tim Hardaway and Scottie Pippen dropped plenty of three point shots from the perimeter and Michael Jordan was his usual superstar self!

Legendary First Team All-Stars

Wilt Chamberlain
Michael Jordan
Nate Thurmond
Bob Cousy
Elgin Baylor

Legends Second Team All-Stars

Bill Russell
Clyde Drexler
Earvin Magic Johnson
Tim Hardaway
John Stockton

NBA 2K3 Season Simulation

As you've probably figured out by now, NBA 2K3 is an amazingly accurate simulation of the NBA. So accurate that it makes an ideal crystal ball for trying to prognosticate what will happen during this year's NBA season.

So that's what we did – we ran 10 season simulations using NBA 2K3, averaged out the team records to determine playoff seeding, then simulated the playoffs to predict this season's NBA Champion.

Many things that happened during the season and playoffs were predictable – the Lakers, Kings, Mavs, and Nets all made it back to the playoffs. But there were some surprises – The Clippers turned in a stellar season and ended up as the 4th seed in the West, the Memphis Grizzlies made their first appearance in the playoffs in franchise history, and post season regulars such as the Jazz got shut out this year... at least according to the simulation.

Photo By Rocky Widner/ NBAE/ Getty Images

2002-2003 NBA 2K3 Season Simulation Results:

All Star Squad

	East	West
PG	Jason Kidd	Gary Payton
SG	Tracy McGrady	Kobe Bryant
SF	Latrell Sprewell	Shawn Marion
PF	Antoine Walker	Kevin Garnett
C	Ben Wallace	Shaquille O'Neal

Reserves

Baron Davis	Andre Miller
Ray Allen	Wally Szczerbiak
Jamal Mashburn	Scottie Pippen
Shareef Abdur-Rahim	Tim Duncan
Dikembe Mutombo	Keon Clark
Tim Thomas	Pau Gasol
Paul Pierce	Brent Barry

The 2002-2003 NBA Playoffs

EAST - 1st Round

Seeding

(1) NJ Nets
(8) Boston Celtics
(4) New Orleans Hornets
(5) Phila. 76ers
(2) Milwaukee Bucks
(7) Indiana Pacers
(3) Orlando Magic
(6) Detroit Pistons

2nd Round

NJ Nets
New Orleans Hornets
Milwaukee Bucks
Orlando Magic

3rd Round

New Orleans Hornets
Milwaukee Bucks

WEST - 1st Round

(1) Sacramento Kings
(8) Memphis Grizzlies
(4) LA Clippers
(5) Portland Trailblazers
(2) LA Lakers
(7) San Antonio Spurs
(3) Dallas Mavericks
(6) Seattle SuperSonics

2nd Round

Sacramento Kings
LA Clippers
LA Lakers
Seattle SuperSonics

3rd Round

LA Clippers
LA Lakers

Season Simulation

All NBA 1st Team	2nd Team	3rd Team
Steve Francis – Houston	Jason Kidd – NJ	Baron Davis-N.O.
Tracy McGrady - Orlando	Kobe Bryant - LA	Paul Pierce - Boston
Shawn Marion -Phoenix	Latrell Sprewell -NY	Jamal Mashburn - N.O.
Kevin Garnett - Minn	Chris Weber-Sacramento	Tim Duncan- San Antonio
Shaquille O'Neal -LA	Ben Wallace - Detroit	Alonzo Mourning - Miami

Season Awards

Season MVP						
Kevin Garnett	MIN	25.9 ppg	48.2 FG%	4.0 assists	12.6 rebounds	1.5 blocks
Rookie of the Year						
Jay Williams	CHC	19 ppg	47 FG%	4.2 assists	5.0 rebounds	1.2 steals
6th Man Award						
Kenny Thomas	HOU	16 ppg	46.5 FG%	7.2 rebounds		
Defensive Player of the Year						
Ben Wallace	DET	12 ppg	11.5 rebounds	1.2 steals	2.8 blocks	
Most Improved Player						
Antonio McDyess	NY	19.3 ppg	50.4 FG%	9.7 rebounds	1.2 blocks	

Eastern Conference Finals

New Orleans Hornets

Milwaukee Bucks

Western Conference Finals

LA Clippers

LA Lakers

NBA Championship

Milwaukee Bucks

LA Lakers

NBA Champion

COACHES CORNER

Photo by Andrew D. Bernstein/NBAE/Getty Images

Play Calling 101

Just like in poker you need to know when to hold them and when to fold them, in NBA 2K3 you need to know how to get around defenders or stop some of the best offensive teams in the league. The artificial intelligence (AI) in NBA 2K3 takes no prisoners, so whether you are playing one of your pals or against the in-game AI, you might want to take some time to go over these plays to shore up the holes in your game.

We were able to get some tips for you on which defensive and offensive plays to call straight from the horse's mouth so to speak. Jeremy "The Coach" Tiner, one of the designers on NBA 2K3, jotted down his thoughts, just like a coach, and walked us through the NBA 2K3 playbook!

This guide will definitely help you choose which plays to call in the various versions of NBA 2K3 for the GameCube, PlayStation 2 and Xbox, but it will also help you understand basketball more in general should you decide to give the real game a try!

Added Bonus! *As an added extra, we are also including insights from Basketball Hall of Famer, Rick Barry. Rick was named one of the 50 greatest players in NBA history, and is a 12-time NBA and ABA All-Star who took the Golden State Warriors to their only world championship. Look for Rick's extra commentary inside the blue boxes.*

Photo by Catherine S[illegible]/Getty Images

Offensive Play Calling 101

The plays generally have most of the info you need about the play in the title. Take "Iso Wing SG" for example. This is an isolation play, on the wing for the Shooting Guard.

Most plays are named after the actual play types referred to by NBA coaches and players. This is done in order to be as descriptive and as authentic as possible.

"All the early offensive plays are run to get the ball to the player described in the position listed immediately after a fast break opportunity doesn't create a shot."

Post

Post plays are designed to get a player in good position in the post with the ball where they can use their post up moves to score. Post plays generally will have a player on the perimeter make an entry pass and be ready to get a return pass to shoot the open 3 if their defender doubles down on the post player.

"Early low post plays are designed to get the ball to the big men down low immediately after a fast break fails to create a shot."

Iso

Isolation plays (commonly referred to as "Iso" plays) are similar to post plays in that they get a particular player the ball in a situation where the can go one-on-one with their defender. The difference is that Iso plays require using a different set of skills to be effective, primarily dribble moves, pivot mode moves (jab steps) and jump shooting. Most Iso plays will give the main offensive option good floor spacing so he will have enough room to beat his defender one-on-one.

"Isolation plays are if you prefer to create more one-on-one situations, you would use an iso play to free up your shooter."

Pick & Roll

If you are not a basketball fan, you might think this is a new kind of "dance." Well, in the NBA this dance allows you to score points and in a real hurry. This particular play has been the bread and butter of the Utah Jazz who have made it legendary with the dynamic duo of John Stockton and Karl "The Mailman" Malone.

One player sets a pick for the ball handler. The ball handler then uses that pick to lose his defender. Right after the pick is used, the player that set the pick will "roll" to the basket.

At this point, the ball handler can either shoot, drive to the basket or pass to the player rolling to the basket.

"This is basically a two-man game where the ball handler gets a screen, then the screener frees himself for a pass, after the screen, rolling to the basket. You preferably want the biggest guy on your team setting your screen.

A traditional pick and roll play is where the man having the screen set for him has the ball... this, of course, was my favorite play."

Screen three point

These plays are designed to get a three-point shooter the ball and use a screen to shoot from behind. Useful for getting good looks from three-point range.

"The early pt plays are designed to create a 3pt opportunity off a fast break."

Motion

These plays are designed to get good off-ball player movement to create cuts to the basket and create mismatches. The Motion three plays are good for setting up the three point shots as well.

"Motion plays are something you use if you like to have your team run their offense with more movement to free up guys."

Triangle

The triangle offense, run primarily by Phil Jackson's Lakers, is designed to create good floor balance and allow players to interchange roles on the court. Most of the plays in NBA 2K3 are designed to get Shaquille O'Neal of the Los Angeles Lakers the ball down low or get Kobe Bryant, his Lakers teammate the ball in a variety of spots.

Hi-Post

Hi-post plays in NBA 2K3 have the center handling the ball at the top of the key looking for cutters. A cutter will often curl around a screen and can get an open lane to the basket. Good passers will recognize this and hit the open man cutting to the hoop for the easy bucket!

Become the Minister of DEFENSE in NBA 2K3!

Defensive Play Calling 101

If you want to become the minister of defensive strategy in Sega Sports NBA 2K3, you will want to read through our exclusive strategy from NBA 2K3 game design guru Jeremy "The Coach" Tiner!

Man-to-Man

This is the standard, general-purpose defense in basketball, which works well if you have good defenders at every position. You are more vulnerable to defensive mismatches in this set though because the help defense won't come as fast as with some of the zone defenses.

"Man-to-Man – This defense is used the majority of the time by most teams. All players are looking to help each other out in this defense."

Full Court Press

Defense will play tight man-to-man defense for the entire length of the court. This defense is best used when you really need to apply pressure to the offense and slow their progress up court – although while executing this defensive set you will be more vulnerable in transition because there is no one back in charge of guarding the basket.

"Full Court Press – People use this to create turnovers from bad passes or to stop the offensive teams from getting the ball over half court in seven seconds. Also, use this to speed up the play of the game. This is great to use versus a team that likes to play a set up, slow down game or versus teams that don't pass well."

Half Court Press

This defense is more aggressive than man-to-man, but less aggressive than full court. Defense will play tight man-to-man, starting at the half court line. This won't slow the offense as much as the full court press, but it is less risky in transition because the defense sets up in the half court.

Full Court Trap

This defense will allow you to double-team the ball handler, allowing you to try and use sideline as a third defender the full length of the court. This is a risky defense, but can be rewarded by creating plenty of turnovers.

"Full Court Trap- A more aggressive way to disrupt a team's offense and possibly cause a turnover. This is also used against a team with bad passing guards."

Half Court Trap

This defensive technique will allow you to double-team (put two men on) the ball handler, in an attempt to utilize the sideline as a third defender in the half court. This defense is very risky, but not as risky as the full court trap. This defense can be rewarded by creating turnovers, but remember to keep an eye on the open man.

"Half-Court Trap – This is an attempt to disrupt the other team's offense and possibly cause a turnover. Usually used against a team with a point guard who isn't a great passer."

Intentional Foul

Intentional fouling is set to auto as default in NBA 2K3, but you may manually select it as well. This defense will send defenders after the ball handler to foul him. This is used in late game situations where a team needs to score points in a hurry and get more possessions.

Photo by Otto Gruele/NBAE/Allsport

2-3 Zone

This is a good defense to use against a team with poor outside shooting and a strong inside presence. You will have 3 defenders playing near the basket that can collapse quickly on the ball in the post and 2 defenders playing on the perimeter.

"2-3 Zone: This zone is used against a poor outside shooting team or a team that has a great low post game."

3-2 Zone

This defense is geared against a perimeter-oriented team. Meaning a team that likes to shoot the ball from the outside for treys (three-point shots) and doesn't have a strong center to dunk the ball or score baskets from deep inside the key. You will have three defenders guarding the perimeter, making it difficult for outside shooters to get open looks at the basket, thus thwarting three point shot attempts. This defense will definitely leave you more vulnerable around the basket though.

"3-2 Zone: This defense is used against a strong outside shooting team that doesn't have a particularly good inside game."

1-3-1 Zone

This defense allows you to apply excellent pressure on the perimeter of the court and makes it difficult to penetrate and work the ball down low in the paint, but it's a poor rebounding defense, since you will generally only have one player in position to grab rebounds. This zone defense will also leave you vulnerable for three-point attempts from the corners.

"1-3-1 This is used against a weak outside shooting team that has an outstanding point guard. This zone allows you to put more pressure on the point guard."

Box - 1 Zone

This defense allows you to set up a four-man box formation, with one defender playing the opposing team's best player man to man. This can be effective at times to disrupt a team, but is more of a "junk defense." There are many ways a savvy opponent can exploit the "box-1" zone by taking advantage of the many mismatch opportunities he should be able to find.

"Box-1 Zone: The defense is played if your opponent's team has one great individual player with teammates who aren't particularly good shooters. It's designed to make a team beat you with someone other than their star player."

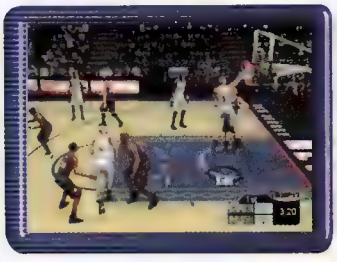
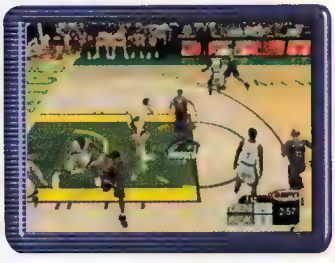



Photo by Victor Baliza

The Best of the Best: Top-Rated Players in Offensive and Defensive Categories

Cream of the Crop—Overall Best Players

	Team	Rating
1. Shaquille O'Neal	LA Lakers	98
2. (tie) Kobe Bryant	LA Lakers	96
Tracy McGrady	Orlando	
Tim Duncan	San Antonio	
3. (tie) Jason Kidd	NJ	94
Kevin Garnett	Minnesota	

Money in the Paint—Close Range Shooters

	Team	Rating
1. Many tied including:		97
Ray Allen	Milwaukee	
Kobe Bryant	LA Lakers	
Elton Brand	LA Clippers	
Vince Carter	Toronto	
Baron Davis	New Orleans	
Tim Duncan	San Antonio	
Steve Francis	Houston	
Grant Hill	Orlando	

From the Top of the Key—Medium Range Shooters

	Team	Rating
Ray Allen	Milwaukee	96
Kobe Bryant	LA Lakers	94
Tracy McGrady	Orlando	94
Dirk Nowitzki	Dallas	94
Paul Pierce	Boston	92

Long Range Bombers—Three-Point Shooters

	Team	Rating
Ray Allen	Milwaukee	95
Paul Pierce	Boston	91
Dirk Nowitzki	Dallas	91
Predrag Stojakovic	Sacramento	90
Steve Nash	Dallas	90
Reggie Miller	Indiana	90

Perfection at the Charity Stripe—Best Free Throw Shooters

	Team	Rating
Reggie Miller	Indianapolis	93
Jon Barry	Detroit	92
Danny Ferry	San Antonio	91
Trajan Langdan	Free Agent	91
Terrell Brandon	Minnesota	90

Top Dunkers—and we're not talking donuts

	Team	Rating
Shawn Marion	Phoenix	95
Ricky Davis	Cleveland	95
Kobe Bryant	LA Lakers	90
Steve Francis	Houston	90
Kevin Garnett	Minnesota	90
Darvin Ham	Milwaukee	90
Several more at 90		

Ball Magicians—Top Ball Handlers

	Team	Rating
Allen Iverson	Philadelphia	95
Tracy McGrady	Orlando	90
Steve Francis	Houston	90
Baron Davis	New Orleans	90
Jay Williams	Chicago	90
Jerry Stackhouse	Detroit	90
Gary Payton	Seattle	90
Stephon Marbury	Phoenix	90
Ray Allen	Milwaukee	90
Jason Williams	Memphis	90

Threading the Needle—Best Passers

	Team	Rating
Jason Kidd	NJ	95
John Stockton	Utah	90
Gary Payton	Seattle	90
Baron Davis	New Orleans	90
Jamaal Tinsley	Indiana	87
Mark Jackson	Denver	87

The Best of the Best

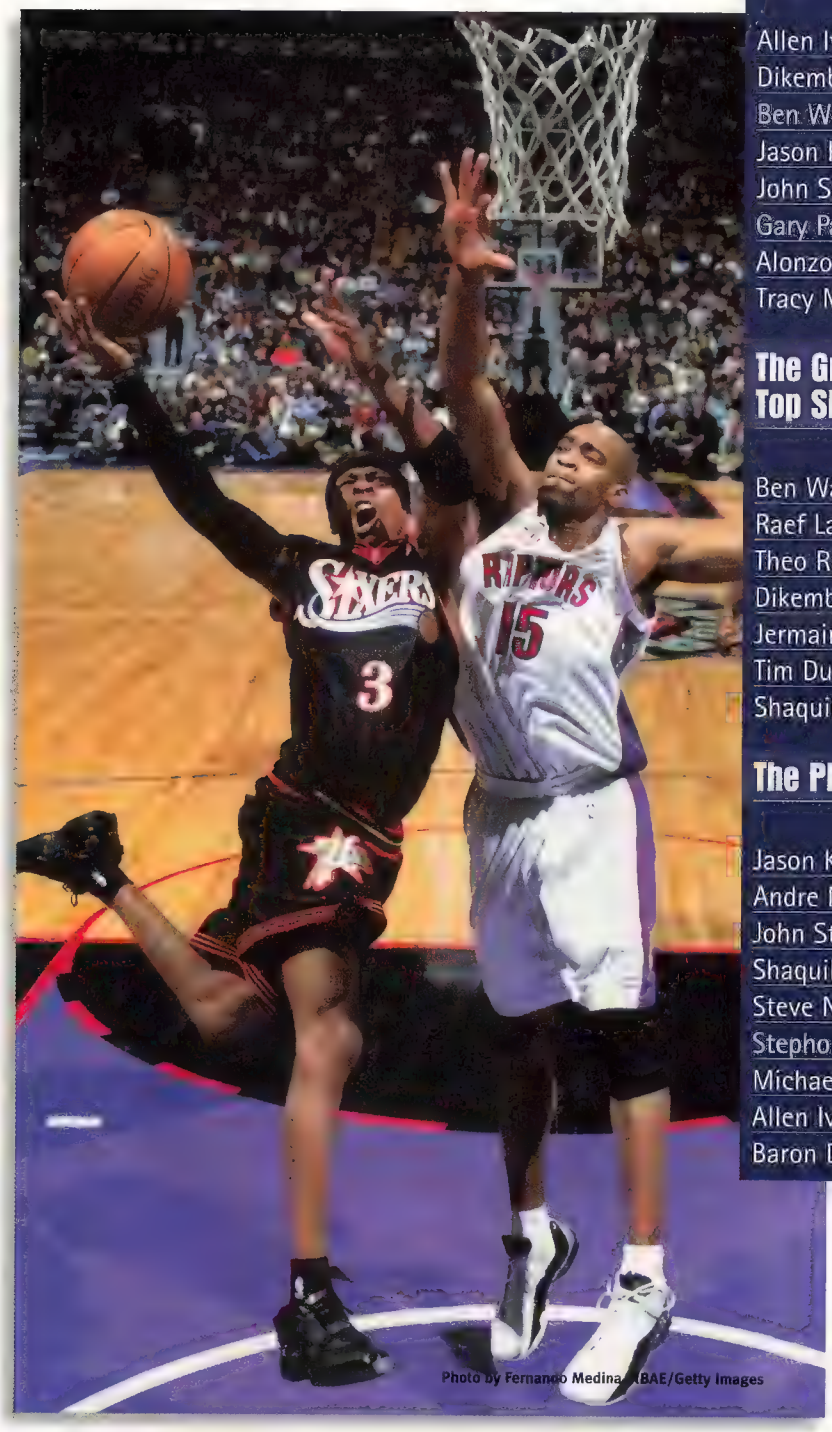


Photo by Fernando Medina/NBAE/Getty Images

Defensive Stoppers—Top Defensive Awareness

	Team	Rating
Allen Iverson	Philadelphia	95
Dikembe Mutombo	NJ	95
Ben Wallace	Detroit	95
Jason Kidd	NJ	90
John Stockton	Utah	90
Gary Payton	Seattle	90
Alonzo Mourning	Miami	90
Tracy McGrady	Orlando	90

The Great Walls of the NBA—Top Shot Blockers

	Team	Rating
Ben Wallace	Detroit	97
Raef LaFrentz	Dallas	92
Theo Ratliff	Atlanta	90
Dikembe Mutombo	NJ	90
Jermaine O'Neal	Indiana	90
Tim Duncan	San Antonio	90
Shaquille O'Neal	LA Lakers	90

The Playmakers—Top Offensive Awareness

	Team	Rating
Jason Kidd	NJ	95
Andre Miller	LA Clippers	95
John Stockton	Utah	90
Shaquille O'Neal	LA Lakers	90
Steve Nash	Dallas	90
Stephon Marbury	Phoenix	90
Michael Jordan	Washington	90
Allen Iverson	Philadelphia	90
Baron Davis	New Orleans	90

Fantasy Draft Strategy

Imagine this scenario: NBA owners decide that the balance of power has shifted too far to the Western Division. Fans no longer show up for Knicks games, the Eastern champ is routinely trounced in the finals by the (pick one) Lakers, Kings, Spurs, Mavericks, etc. When TV ratings for the finals plummet below reruns of "Saved By the Bell," the NBA owners decide to take action.

In an emergency meeting, the owners hatch a plan – they will put every current NBA player in a pool, draw numbers, then select all new teams, thus restoring competitive balance to the league.

That scenario essentially can be played out time and time again in NBA 2K3's fantasy draft mode. The fantasy draft option is open to you in the Franchise, Season, Tournament and Playoff modes, but we will only discuss its use in a Franchise scenario.

If You Build It They Will Come

There are a couple keys to drafting a successful franchise in NBA 2K3. First, you should note that drafts in the game do not "snake" as a traditional fantasy draft would. That means the team that picks first in the first round will also pick first in the second round, third round, fourth round, etc. This is key, because the initial success of your team is tied to your first three picks. If you're picking at the end of each round, that means 28 other teams are better than you at the point production spots in their lineups. To illustrate, here is the starting five for three teams drafted in fantasy mode, three separate drafts – one with a top pick during each round, one with a middle pick, and one that was stuck at the bottom of the draft:

Top Pick Selections	Middle Pick Selections	End Pick Selections
C: Shaquille O'Neal	**C:** Tim Duncan	**C:** Theo Ratliff
PF: Danny Fortson	**PF:** Shareef Abdur-Rahim	**PF:** Jermaine O'Neal
SF: Morris Peterson	**SF:** Drew Gooden	**SF:** Drew Gooden
SG: Vince Carter	**SG:** Quentin Richardson	**SG:** Kareem Rush
PG: Mike Bibby	**PG:** Steve Nash	**PG:** Gilbert Arenas
Bench: Eddie Griffin	**Bench:** Michael Redd	**Bench:** Eddie Griffin
Frank Williams	Adonal Foyle	Tyrone Lue
Kareem Rush	Tyrone Lue	Ron Mercer
Eduardo Najera	Monty Williams	Adonal Foyle

If you played a round-robin tournament with these three squads you would expect the team that drafted at the top of the round to win most of the time – by picking first in every round it was able to grab the most dominant center in basketball, a superstar shooting guard who can hit a shot from anywhere or slash to the basket, a top notch point guard, and two forwards who are great rebounders and also scoring threats. The bench is loaded with young, talented backups, including some guys that are starters on the low drafting squad.

Round 1 Sample Draft

Because there are only a few talented centers, if you're choosing in the middle of the round or later, you might be forced to make a position switch, choosing a talented power forward and plugging them into your center spot. The middle pick team was lucky enough to snag the best power forward in the game, Tim Duncan, while adding another top player, Shareef Abdur-Rahim, at the power forward spot.

The biggest difference between the team drafting out of the top spot and the middle pick team is in the backcourt. While the middle pick team's backcourt may help win them a championship some day, it doesn't have a superstar scoring threat like the top pick team's Vince Carter. It also had to go with an inexperienced player like Drew Gooden in the starting small forward position.

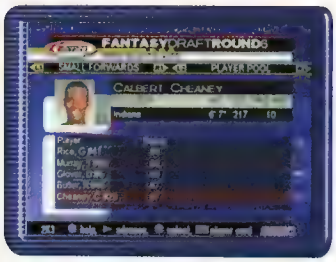
Centers:
Shaq, Ben Wallace, Alonzo Mourning, Dikembe Mutombo, Raef LaFrentz, David Robinson

Power Forwards:
Tim Duncan, Kevin Garnett, Dirk Nowitzki, Chris Webber, Elton Brand, Rasheed Wallace, Jermaine O'Neal, Antoine Walker, Karl Malone

Small Forwards:
Shawn Marion, Michael Jordan, Predrag Stojakovic, Latrell Sprewell, Rashard Lewis

Shooting Guards:
Kobe Bryant, Tracy McGrady, Paul Pierce, Ray Allen, Allen Iverson

Point Guards:
Jason Kidd, Gary Payton, Baron Davis, Andre Miller



Here is a look at the players drafted in the first round of an NBA 2K3 Draft

The Later Rounds

Once you've drafted your starting five, it's time to think about the role-players that will be valuable to your team as the season progresses. It's important to remember that even though you are building your team in a fantasy draft, unlike most fantasy teams, you actually have to put yours on the court and hope they can perform well. So it's important to think about what you need to give your team the edge over your opponents.

You want to make sure you have a capable back-up for each starting position, so your starters can get a breather or in case they get into foul trouble. When you choose back ups, make sure to check the player cards of all the players you're considering by hitting the Select Button. Look for players that are specialists – top shot blockers, guards with a high three-point shot rating, good defenders. These are the extra pieces of the puzzle that separate the contenders from the pretenders.

You also want to keep the future in mind when possible; drafting young inexperienced players with upside such as Drew Gooden, Quentin Richardson, Gilbert Arenas, Frank Williams, etc. In franchise mode, these players will have a chance to develop into stars for you.

Exclusive In-Game Strategies Revealed!

Here are some exclusive NBA 2K3 tips and basketball strategies to help you dominate the paint and fake your opponents out of his shorts. We will also walk you through some techniques on how to even make Shaquille O'Neal a 100 percent free throw shooter!

Free Throw Tips

One of the most frustrating parts of this game for many gamers will be figuring out how to hit their free throws.

It's not that difficult, but it will take some practice and some patience.

Maneuvering the two analog sticks is the most challenging part of the free throw experience. In order to be a successful free throw shooter you will have to finesse the free throw arrows and line them up with the front rim in order to hit them regularly.

To understand free throws, think of the first time you played a racing game and you over steered to the point you went off the track. Lining up the free throw arrows uses that same principle. Don't hammer on or bend the analog sticks too much, gently move the arrows together and when you have them in position lock them in with the L1 or R1 buttons on the PlayStation 2 controller and then shoot the ball.

On the GameCube use the L and R shoulder buttons and then hit the B-button to shoot.

On the Xbox hit the L and R triggers and hit X to shoot once you have the arrows locked in on the front of the rim.

Calling for a Pick

This is one of best strategy tips that will go a long way in allowing you to score more points and school your AI or human opponents.

If you are playing NBA 2K3 on the PlayStation 2, press down on the left analog stick (sometimes referred to as the L3 button). A player will come off of his man and set a pick. To call for a player to set a pick on the Xbox press the Left analog pad down. On the GameCube press up on the directional pad.

Once you recognize the pick, go away from your defender, around the pick, and head to the bucket. Depending on how good the defender is you might have to call for a couple of picks before you can get a clear lane to the hoop.

Shot Blocking, Dunks, and Lay-ups

In order to block a shot and reject a dunk timing is everything and so is positioning. You must be in the paint close to the basket facing the player attacking the basket. Time your jump and guess when he is going to leave his feet while at the same time pressing the Square button on the PlayStation 2, square button on the Xbox and the B button on GameCube controller. To increase your chances you can also hold the turbo button, which will give you a better chance at the block (turbo is the R1 trigger on the PS2 and Xbox and the R trigger on GameCube).

Score More Points!

If you have a player on your team with whom you would like to get more field goal attempts, use the Primary and Secondary Offensive Options and set either or both to that player. This will allow that particular player to get a boost in attempted field goals and possibly, depending on the player's skill, earn you more points per game.

Creating Turnovers

At beginning of any game, go into "coaching" option. Assign your best defensive guard/ball stealer to the opponent's point guard. This will give you the best opportunity to create turnovers in the opponent's backcourt. Also, set up double-teams on the opponent's best frontcourt scorer for when they are in the paint.

Whenever the opposing team is in-bounding the ball, especially at their end of the court, try to cut off the in-bound passing lanes by maneuvering between the man with the ball and his teammate.

If a good defensive player puts lots of pressure on the player just as he takes the in-bounds pass one of a couple things can happen - most of them good:

1. You can force the opposing guard with the ball to "flinch" - stepping on the end line and turning the ball over.
2. You can steal the ball and get an easy lay-up or dunk.
3. You slow down the opposing offense.

As you get better at defending the opposing point guard, this strategy will generate much more good results than bad. Defense is a big part of this game and the quicker you learn to play defense the sooner you will become the NBA 2K3 champion!

Executing the Drop Step!

You can take Shaquille O'Neal, or any big man, to the hole in NBA 2K3 by leaning in the direction of the defender and executing a drop step and then rolling off of him when he bumps into you. This technique works 100 percent of the time if you are in Rookie or Pro mode and have a good low post player like Tim Duncan of the San Antonio Spurs or Chris Webber of the Sacramento Kings.

Changing Direction

If you are heading to the hoop and want to fake out your opponent with a change of direction, here's the trick: press the B button on the Xbox controller, the X button on the GameCube and the Circle button on the PlayStation 2 controller. This will throw off your defender and you will get some extra space to shoot the jumper. In fact, sometimes you will lose your defender entirely and you will be able to go in for a poster-like dunk.

Nuances of the Game

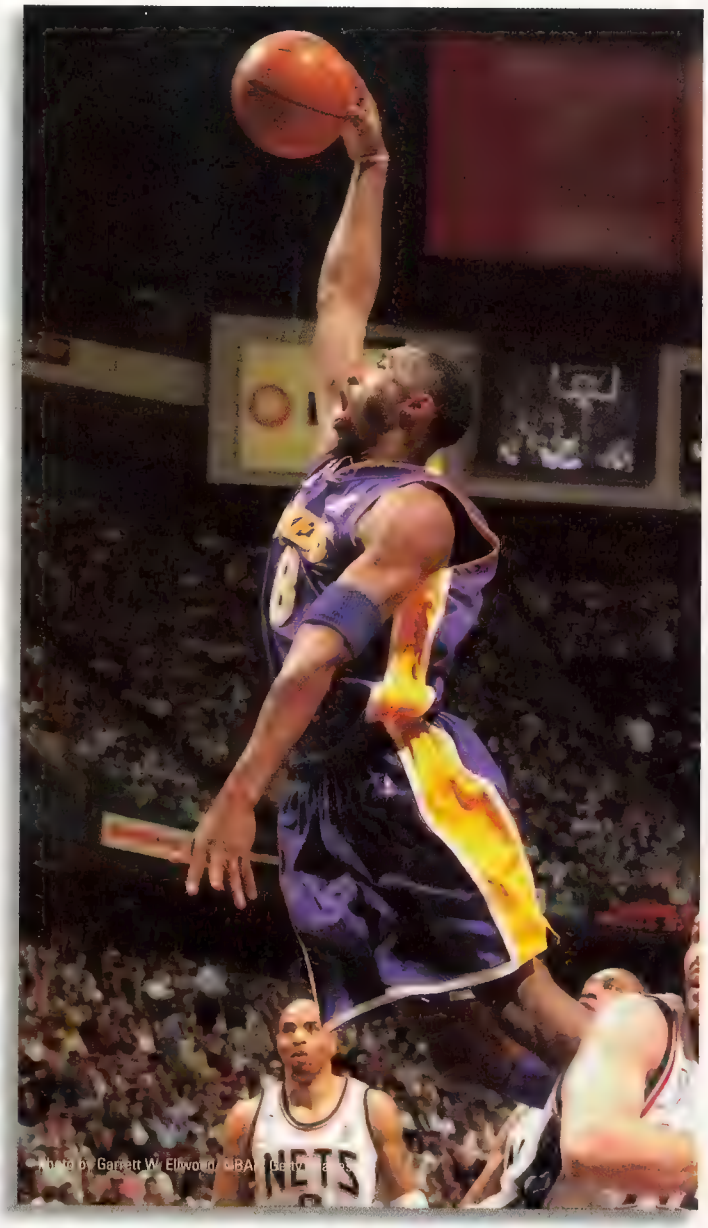
Calling for the Ball!

Be sure to watch the defenders on the opposite team when one of them "calls for the ball" by raising an arm in the air. This is an opportune time to try to get in position to steal the pass from that player or at least get in good blocking position.

On offense, use your picks to clear a path for yourself to the basket. Quick players with good ball handling skills such as Allen Iverson, Vince Carter, and Steve Francis can really rack up the points by shaking their defender on a screen then driving the basket for the easy lay-up or dunk. Sometimes you will have to run a defender into multiple screens before you are finally clear of him.

Draining the Three!

Call a pick and then roll around the pick with a high rated three-point shooter (see chart on page 82.) The higher the player's three-point rating the better the chance the player has of draining it. Another technique is to make sure the Biorhythm option is on. Take your three-point shooter and score some short to medium-range buckets to raise his Biorhythm rating. Then try to drain the three, but keep in mind that timing and getting an open look at the basket are also key elements in making a three-point shot.



Executing the Behind the Back Cross Over Dribble

In order to execute the behind the back crossover you need to use a guard as opposed to a center or a power forward- otherwise you will probably lose the ball.

Press the pivot button while you are dribbling, when you jab step press the crossover button and you will be able to do the behind the back crossover dribble most of the time to get around a defender.

On the Xbox press the N-button to pivot and then press B to execute the behind the back crossover dribble.

On the GameCube you press Z button for the pivot and the X button for the Crossover Dribble. On the PlayStation 2 you hit L2 for Pivot and the Circle button on the PlayStation 2 controller while dribbling the ball in order to execute the behind the back crossover dribble.

Best Offensive and Defensive Plays at a Glance!

Best offensive plays: any Pick and Roll HI, Pick and Roll Hi 2, or Pick and Roll Low plays. (You can run off the screens yourself. CPU players hardly ever successfully run close around screens so that their man can't slide through. Consequently, plays like Motion PG, or Hi Post SG don't work well). The best defense to select is the 3-2 zone. It allows you to recover a lot of rebounds, get charges called on offense when they drive the basket (shots at the basket are almost always contested), and decent perimeter coverage (best if you personally guard each wingman, though).

Building The Perfect Beast
Insider Tips on NBA 2K3's Franchise Mode

General Strategy

Franchise has a cyclical nature. Some teams rise, like the Nets last season, and some teams fall, like the Warriors.... every year... In any case, your strategy for building your team should be based on what your roster looks like.

The worst place to be in franchise mode is playing just under .500 ball with a bunch of high-paid, aging, declining veterans. A team like that really has no future so it's best to figure that out early and bite the bullet. Dump points by trading away long contracts for short contracts or try trading for some promising young talent. Acquire draft picks via trading as well. Your team will suffer in the short term, but you will get better draft picks as a result of being terrible. You can spend more resources on scouting and try to draft some future stars, especially if you make some good trades for some top picks. After a couple seasons of this, you should have some young, undeveloped talent with lots of potential and cleared up lots of points under the point limit. Now you can make a run at any top free agents that might hit the market and start competing for a championship again.

Developing players

Players will improve more and higher overall under certain conditions. To maximize a player's growth, you should start him every game possible and be sure to have a coach with a teacher rating of *Master*. A player can improve 50% more than usual with the ideal conditions.

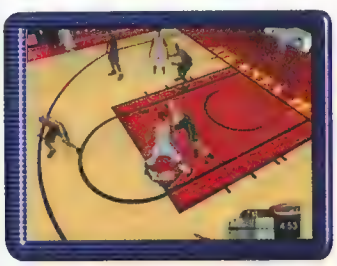
Off Season Tips

FA Re-signing

This phase is very important because you can go over the point limit to re-sign your own free agents. It is usually a good idea to re-sign your promising free agents once their contracts have expired. In negotiation, a longer contract will mean a slightly cheaper per year point value for some players. There is nothing wrong with locking up a young star for 7 years.

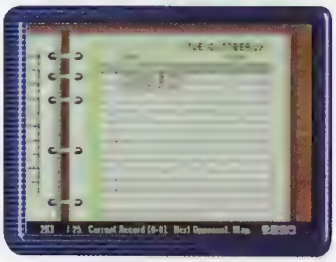
Re-sign coach

This isn't really a phase, but your coach's contract will expire at the end of the season if his contract is up. Signing a coach kind of depends where your team is at. If you are rebuilding, get a coach with a teacher rating of *Master* if possible. If you are trying to contend for a championship, get a coach with high levels in *Offense* and *Defense*. The better coaches will want more points to coach teams with less talent.



Allocating Scouting Resources
Rebuilding teams are surely going to have more interest in having a lot of workouts at their disposal so they can get an accurate look at the draft class.

Player Scouting
Player scouting can be very useful for making informed decisions during the draft. This is how it works:



Mock Draft
This is the projected first round, which will become more accurate as the weeks of scouting pass. You can assign workouts in this screen so it's an easy way to keep track of top guys if you have a good pick.

Player Scouting

Each workout unlocks information about a player. This is a table of what each workout unlocks:

Characteristic	Initial Report	1st Workout	2nd Workout	3rd Workout
General +	2	2	1	4
Specific +	0	1	3	4
General -	2	2	1	4
Specific -	0	1	3	4
Ht. & Wt.	Approximate	Accurate	Accurate	Accurate
Potential	General	General	General	Specific
NBA Compare	Approximate	Approximate	Approximate	Accurate

The most important info is learned after the 3rd workout. Potential and NBA Comparison will basically tell you how good the player can be and what player he will most resemble at his peak. If the specific line about Potential says "Superstar" or "Star," the player will pretty much become an 80 to 90-range player.

Draft

The work for the draft should pretty much be done in the scouting phase. If you've done your homework, just rely on your cheat sheet of "scouting targets."

Generally drafting the best available player regardless of position. You can always make trades later if you have that star talent to trade with.

Sign Rookies/Free Agents

You have the option to sign rookies or not. The rookie pay scale in the NBA pretty much took the negotiation out of signing rookies so we have fixed values here, depending on draft order. Signing free agents is a different story. Prices go down in the later weeks with the best discount in the 6th week. If any good free agents are left in week 6 and you are over the point limit, it will never hurt to offer the 36k exception to any leftovers.

It's Good to Be the Best!

If a free agent can't find the contract he is looking for during the free agent period and goes unsigned into the regular season (preseason doesn't count), he will offer his services to the best-rated team that can offer him the most for one season. If you have the most talent in the league and the free agent is still available once the season starts, make him an offer. He may just sign for the 36k exception because he wants to try to win a championship now.

Training Camp

This will have the subtle effect of focusing a player's game in a particular area over the course of the season. For example, if you work on Perimeter Offense, you could expect three-point shooting to go up a little more than normal and low post defense to go down a little. It's a subtle effect, but can be useful for making a specialist out of a particular player who is on your team for many seasons.

Visual Concepts

A History of Greatness Across All Gaming Platforms!

There are some developers in the video gaming space that command respect because of the body of work they've created. Rare, id Software, and Naughty Dog are a few that come to mind. Visual Concepts is another such company that has quickly joined that elite list.

While a great deal of Sega's game development takes place in Japan, more and more game content is being developed in the U.S. by Visual Concepts.

In the past five years Visual Concepts has proven it can go toe-to-toe with the big boys of sports game development.

Many gamers think that Visual Concepts' road to success began with NFL 2K on the Sega Dreamcast. VC made games well before that, but NFL 2K gave them plenty of momentum and that momentum has carried over through the release of other Sega Sports 2K properties.

Visual Concepts ventured outside of the sports realm in recent years and had plenty of critical success with such classics as Floigan Brothers and the awesome puzzle title, Ooga Booga.

Greg Thomas formed Visual Concepts 1988, with his partner; current executive vice president Scott Patterson, in the hills of Marin County, California.

Greg Thomas

The developer has a long and storied history. Early on Visual Concepts developed games for a number of different platforms, including the Apple IIGS, Super Nintendo, Sega Genesis and the Sega Saturn.

One of the games that many gamers may remember playing is Clay Fighter from Interplay on the Super Nintendo Entertainment System, Sega Genesis and Sega CD. Clay Fighter was a wacky and whimsical fighting game that saw the in game characters rendered from clay models. It was a Street Fighter spoof that worked and worked very well amongst gamers of all ages and tastes.

Visual Concepts successes on the Sega CD caught Sega's eye early on and they hired them to create NBA Action '98. This title began a long and fruitful relationship that culminated in Sega buying Visual Concepts in 1999.

On Sept. 9, 1999, Visual Concepts etched its name firmly on the gaming fraternity as it delivered a blow to other sports gaming development powerhouses in the form of NFL 2K.

This awesome football title elevated the Dreamcast to unexpected heights and helped the system garner untold respect with sports gamers and other developers.

NFL 2K's graphics made gamers feel immersed in the NFL experience unlike any other game that came before it. The graphics rivaled a television broadcast, with 1,300 frames of motion-captured animations taken from actual NFL players, including Minnesota Vikings wide receiver Randy Moss.

Later that same year, Visual Concepts delivered another blockbuster in the form of NBA 2K. It was the only game that allowed NBA gamers to play serious defense and it was a favorite amongst NBA stars and NBA fans. The look and feel of this game was just as immersive and just as graphically intensive as NFL 2K. Visual Concepts proved that their NFL 2K effort was not a flash in the pan and they put themselves on the map for their state-of-the-art motion-capture techniques. The look as well as the programming of a flawless artificial intelligence allowed for some intense in-your-face NBA action.

In 2000, Visual Concepts broke new ground in the sports gaming arena with NFL 2K1. NFL 2K1 was the first game that allowed online play for up to eight players using the Dreamcast modem.

NFL 2K1 had more up its sleeve than just online play. Visual Concepts kept the momentum garnered from NFL 2K and took the next version to new heights by adding new animations, new game play modes, and better play mechanics.

Later that year, Visual Concepts brought out NBA 2K1 and added the same online functionality as they did with NFL 2K1.

Then last year, Visual Concepts made the announcement that they were expanding their Sega Sports 2K series to all platforms starting with NFL 2K2. Soon, PlayStation 2, GameCube and Xbox sports fans would be able to experience what until recently had been reserved exclusively for those that had Dreamcasts.

Currently, Visual Concepts is continuing its multi-platform tradition and bringing five 2K3 titles to the PlayStation 2, Xbox and GameCube. If NBA2K3 is any indication of what we should expect from Visual Concepts in the coming year, it is going to be a very good one for sports gamers of all platforms.

The Visual Concepts Catalog

1993	Clay Fighter	(SNES)
1995	Weapon Lord	(Genesis, SNES)
1997	NBA Action 98	(Saturn, PC)
1999	NFL 2K	(Dreamcast)
	NBA 2K	(Dreamcast)
2000	NFL 2K1	(Dreamcast)
	NBA 2K1	(Dreamcast)
2001	Floigan Brothers	(Dreamcast)
	World Series Baseball 2K2	(Dreamcast)
	NCAA College Football 2K2	(Dreamcast)
	Ooga Booga	(Dreamcast)
	NFL 2K2	(Dreamcast, PS2, Xbox)
	NBA 2K2	(Dreamcast, PS2, Xbox, GameCube)
2002	NBA 2K3	(PS2, Xbox, GameCube)
	NCAA College Football 2K3	(PS2, Xbox, GameCube)
	NCAA College Basketball 2K3	(PS2, Xbox, GameCube)
	NFL 2K3	(PS2, Xbox, GameCube)
	NHL 2K2	(Dreamcast)
	NHL 2K3	(PS2, Xbox, GameCube)
	World Series Baseball	(Xbox)

VISUAL CONCEPTS

Poetry in Motion!

Poetry in Motion!

Photo by Rocky Widner/NBAE/Getty Images

Making of NBA 2K3

"Motion Capture" is what allows game developers to create video game characters that move like real human beings. The motion capture model wears a black suit covered in small balls wrapped in reflective tape. The balls are placed on the parts of the model's body that rotate whenever an action (such as shooting or dribbling) is performed. The cameras record how the model's joints rotate to perform the action and that information is stored in the computer – later to be used to create realistically moving characters.

Visual Concepts already had plenty of motion capture data from great NBA players such as Rasheed Wallace, Bo Outlaw, Brian Grant and Tony Delk that they recorded for NBA 2K2, but according to game designer, Jeremy Tiner, they wanted to get new motion capture – especially more dunks.

Which could be why they got the 2001 All-Star Dunk Competition Champion, Jason Richardson of the Golden State Warriors. According to Tiner, Visual Concepts was able to capture plenty of dunks, alley oops, put backs, lay-ups, pivot mode/jab step stuff, and a number of other things with Richardson.

"Richardson was probably the best NBA guy we have ever had in for motion capture considering the quality of animations, how hard he worked and how well the session went," said Tiner. "He's a great guy – enthusiastic, interested in the game, and very easy to work with. He also has amazing hops!"

Visual Concepts and Sega Sports have a proud history in the realm of sports game development and so it makes sense that they have a quality superstar athlete like Allen Iverson gracing the cover of their NBA 2K3 franchise.

But despite how some fans and the media, view Iverson the headlines don't tell the real story. The 76ers star is a true statesman and a model citizen on and off the court.

Iverson gives back to the community in a number of different ways. He has his own foundation called the Crossover Foundation and since 1998 he has hosted the annual Allen Iverson Celebrity Classic to benefit the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Hampton Roads.

A couple of summers ago he heard from some friends back in his hometown of Hampton, Virginia that the local Boys & Girls Club was in danger of closing its doors because of a lack of funding.

Iverson talked to some friends and set up the Crossover Foundation and this is how the tournaments were born. Iverson also hosted some parties and other events to raise money so that kids of his old community had a place to hang out, have fun, and feel safe.

Iverson also makes a point of visiting sick children in hospitals, without camera crews or reporters in tow. It is well documented that Iverson does the majority of his charitable acts away from the glare of the cameras.

Some say he got this passion for life and for taking care of others from his mother Ann, who also happens to be his biggest supporter on and off the court. Ann attends most if not all of the 76ers home games and sits in the stands with a sign that reads, "That's My Boy!"

But even without the sign it's not hard to tell that she loves her son from the tip off to the final buzzer.

So it only makes sense that Allen Iverson, the best player currently playing in the NBA is gracing the cover of NBA 2K3, the best basketball sports title on the market.

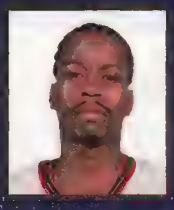
Iverson is one of the most prolific scorers in NBA history. He was the first player selected in the 1996 NBA entry draft and it didn't take Iverson long to make his mark in the NBA and etch his name in the league record books.

He was named NBA Rookie of the Month for November 1997, leading all rookies in scoring with 21.8 points per game, assists 6.4 assists per game and steals with 2.67 steals per game.

He scored 30 points and went 12-19 in field goals in his NBA debut against the Milwaukee Bucks in November of 1996.

During the 2000-01 season he was named the winner of the Maurice Podoloff Trophy as the NBA's Most Valuable Player. In that same year he scored a career-high 54 points against the Cleveland Cavaliers. Another highlight of the season came when he scored a Union Center court record by scoring 20 points in the first quarter and finished with a total of 42 points against the Clippers.

Career Highlights



Position: Guard
Born: June 7th, 1975
Height: 6 foot
College: Georgetown
2001-02 Season Numbers
Points Per Game: 31.4
Rebounds Per Game: 4.5

Iverson at a Glance

Favorite Foods: Lasagna, Fried Shrimp

Favorite Actors: Al Pacino and Samuel L. Jackson

Hobbies: Drawing, reading and playing with his children Tiaura and Allen II

But the 76ers star was getting rave reviews before he stepped foot on an NBA basketball court. In 1995-96 the Associated Press named Iverson first team All-American after averaging 25 points per game as a sophomore at Georgetown. In each of his first two seasons he was selected Defensive Player of the year.

Last year Iverson had a great year statistically and was the top player in the NBA in points per game with an average of 31.4 points per game and was fifth overall in scoring. He played an astounding 43.7 minutes per contest.

He ranked second in the league with 1669 field goal attempts, sixth in the NBA in free throw tries with 585 and was the top player in steals with 2.8 points per game.

Iverson's biggest game point-wise in the 2001-02 season came against the Houston Rockets on January 15th when he scored 58 points by making 21 field goals on 42 tries in 50 minutes played.

But behind all of the statistics and the glare of the NBA cameras and media, Iverson is proving that he is an artist on and off the court.

He is in the process of starting up a record label and is following in the footsteps of Humility Records founder and rapper Shaquille O'Neal to produce rap records.

But for right now his passion is his family, his charitable acts and wreaking some serious havoc on the basketball court.

He's also the best player in NBA 2K3.

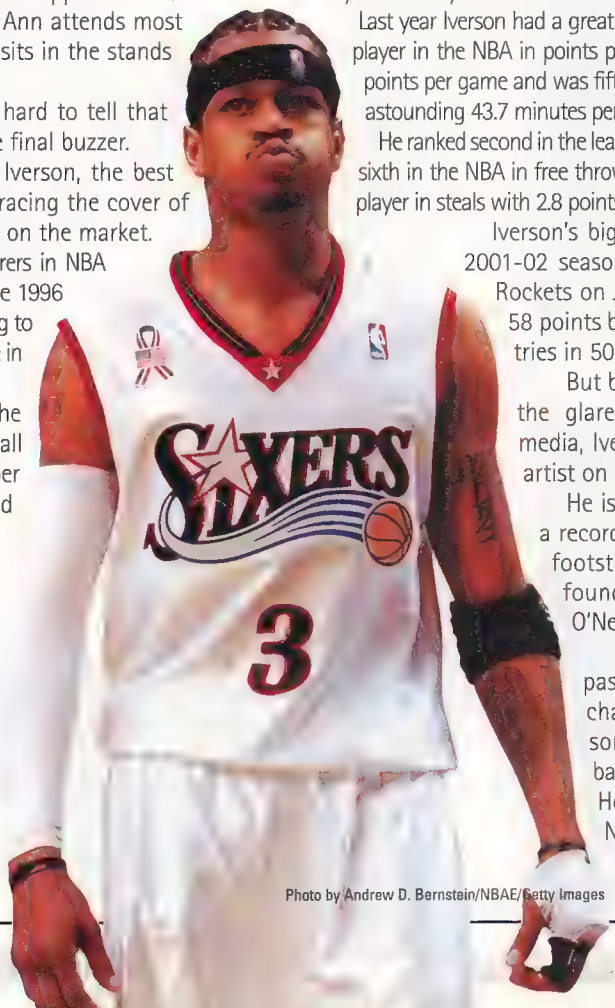


Photo by Andrew D. Bernstein/NBAE/Getty Images

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King of the Court!

Named 2000-2001 NBA Most Valuable Player, leading the league in scoring with over 30 points per game and in steals with 2.51 steals per game.

NBA Player of the month in January 2001.

NBA Player of the week for Jan. 1 to Jan. 8th 2001 and Feb. 12 to 18 2001.

Selected to the 1999-2000 All NBA second team.

Posted a game high 26 points and dished out nine assists in the 2000 NBA All-Star Game.

Named to the 1998-99 All-NBA first team after leading the league in scoring with 26.8 points per game.

Scored the 4,000th point of his career against the Miami Heat on March 5, 1999.

Named NBA Player of the month for February 1999, averaging a league leading 38.5 points per game.

Set the Philadelphia 76er all-time rookie record with 1,787 points.

Scored 40 points five straight games to set an NBA rookie record in April of 1996.

Scored 30 points and went 12 for 19 in field goals in his NBA debut against the Milwaukee Bucks on November 1, 1996.

Selected by the 76ers with their first overall pick of the 1996 entry NBA Draft.

Slamming Online with NBA 2K3!

Sega had been an online pioneer for the entire console gaming industry with its Sega Online Dreamcast efforts. The knowledge and experience that it garnered from that effort has positioned it well to offer all gamers an exhilarating head to head online gaming experience with NBA 2K3 on the PlayStation 2 and Microsoft Xbox.

So if you are not content being the best NBA 2K3 player in your household or on your block, this is your chance to show your gaming skills to the entire world and take your b-ball skills to the web!

Getting Your Playstation 2 Connected

Getting connected with your PlayStation 2 is easy, but you will need to make sure you have a few things first.

In addition to a PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system and a copy of NBA 2K3, you will need to purchase a PlayStation 2 network adaptor. You will also need to have broadband connection in your home in order to get the most out of your PlayStation 2 NBA 2K3 online experience.

In addition you will also need a PlayStation 2 8MB memory card sold separately from the system.

Getting Connected Step by Step

1. From the Main Menu select Game Modes.
2. Use the L1 or R1 Button to scroll to Network.
3. With a Memory Card inserted if no network settings have been saved choose Manage Your Network Configuration File.
4. Follow the steps on screen to complete setup of your network configurations.
5. Return to the Game Modes Network Screen and select Load Network Configuration File.
6. Create a Screen Name and Password.
7. After logging in you will be sent to the Lobby Screen
8. From here select a Region then Lobby (Regions closer to your area will give you a better chance for a more lag free online experience) find another User and send a Challenge for a Scrimmage, Street Game or Ranked game.

Taking It to the Hoop with the Xbox Online!

You will need an Xbox, a copy of the game, an online broadband connection for best results and a subscription to Microsoft's Xbox Live service, which will cost an additional $49.99 for the first-year. Subscribers will get an Xbox Communicator that plugs into the Xbox controller and allows for voice communication with other players, excellent for talking trash to your opponents!

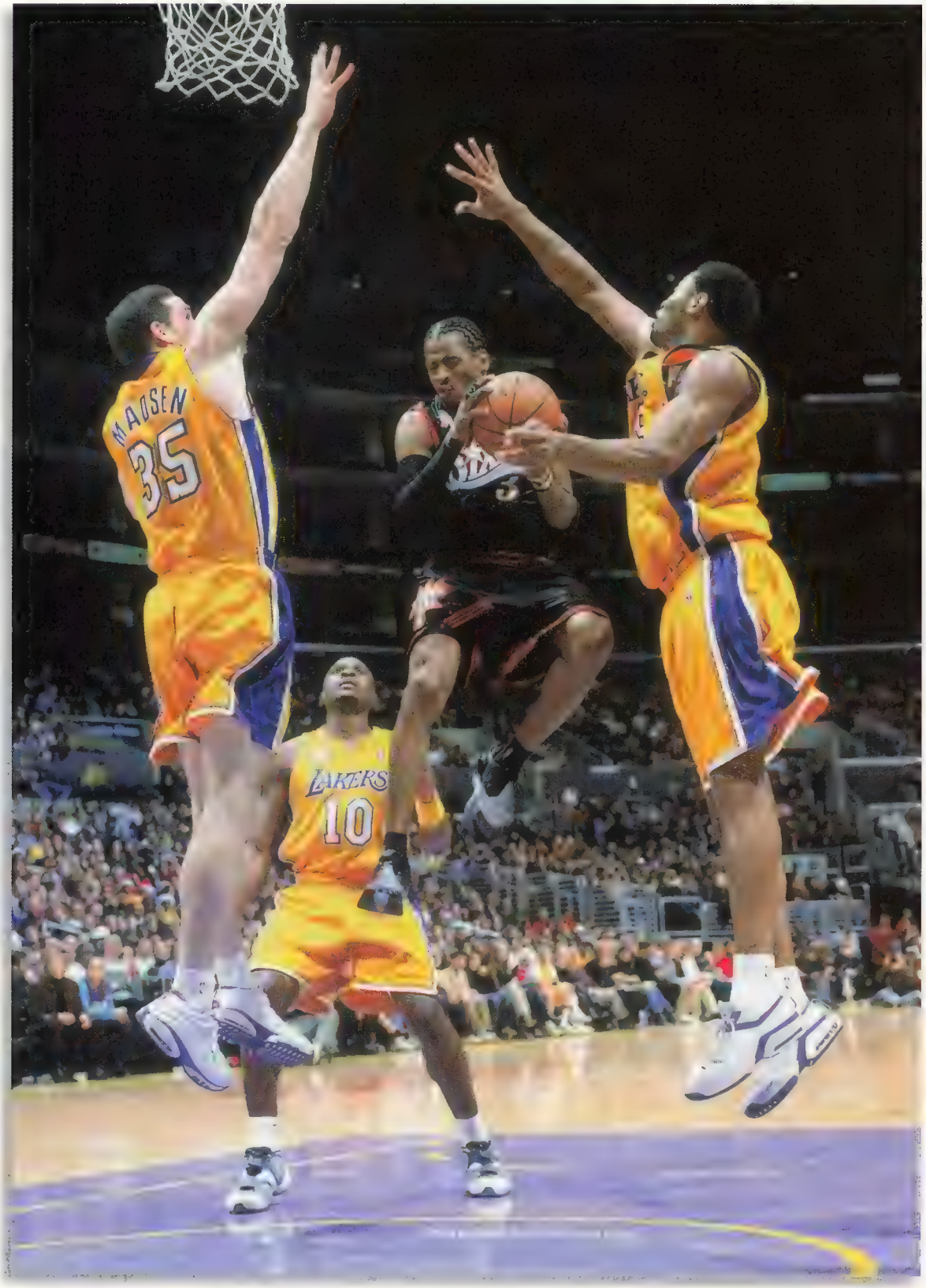
Step-by-Step Xbox Online Info!

1. From the Main Menu select Play Live!
2. Select a User name and enter password.
3. Press start to advance.
4. From here, choose either a Quick Match, or an Optimatch. Quick Match enables players to enter a multiplay experience with a single button-click, and OptiMatch, an Xbox Live exclusive. Gamers will also be able to download player stats and select games against opponents with similar skill levels.
5. If you choose Quick Match, the game will either challenge the first available user, or if no users are available, take you to the match creation screen.
6. If you choose Optimatch, you can customize the exact type of match you'd like to play by altering the game type (Scrimmage, Street Game or Ranked Game), quarter length and difficulty level. If a user matching your specifics has a match already set, you will challenge them automatically. If no matches can be found, you will be taken to the Match Lobby.
7. Once you have created a match, you will be taken to the Match Lobby. There, you will see a list of users with matches set up, as well as your own. Wait there until someone challenges you.

Note to all Online Players

If you are a beginner and if you do decide take your skills online do everyone a favor – if you are losing don't disconnect – it ruins the experience for everyone!

Getting Set up Online



"I Paid Several Hundred Million Dollars and All I Got Was This Bunch of Scrubs!?!"

Your Guide to the Create-A-Team Option

The Create-A-Team option in NBA 2K3 is sort of an extension of Franchise Mode. You can create a team and play them in a regular season or playoff, but what would be the point? If you create your team the realistic way, you're going to have to build your first-year roster from the slim pickings in the free agent pool. Your first year roster is very much like your typical expansion team. You should be happy that you've brought an NBA team to some basketball starved locale, otherwise who would want to pay to see your scrubeenies get trounced every night by the "real" NBA teams?

My partners and I ponied up the cash for the expansion team and secured a lease for an arena – now came the fun part – hiring the guys who were going to play for the San Ramon Vipers during their inaugural season. Well... at least I thought this would be the fun part. Then I saw the player pool we would have to work with – a bunch of CBA, over-the-hill types, and limited upside guys. How were we going to be competitive with this bunch?

Building a team from scratch takes some patience, because you're going to lose a bunch in that first season. The process of creating the team is simple – name the team, name the city, pick a nice team logo, and either name your coach or go hire one. Once you've got your team named and hired the coach, it's time to survey the wealth of "talent" you can sign to play basketball for your squad.

Here's an example of what is available to you in the free agent pool: Point Guards: Travis Best, Anthony Johnson, Mookie Blaylock; Shooting Guards: Voshon Lenard, Bryan Russell, Trajan Langdon; Small Forwards: Rodney Buford, Tyrone Nesby, Kendall Gill; Power Forwards: Shawn Kemp, Charles Oakley, Chris Gatling; Centers: Patrick Ewing, Isaac Austin, Sean Marks.

As you can see, if you try to build your franchise the free agent pool route, you're not going to see the post season for at least two years.

After you have your initial roster, select what mode you want to play in – once again, we recommend Franchise Mode – and choose the Customize League option to add your new squad to a division in the NBA.

Ok, so now it's day one of a brand new NBA season. Your franchise is already a wreck and you haven't even played your first game yet. Your rookie coach is angry with you – he thinks you're trying to build a team on the cheap, which is why he's stuck with the spare free agents parts he's been dealt. You calm him down – you convince him you have a plan.

Your team may not look very good on paper, and they may not be very competitive on the hardwood. However, to contenders, some of your spare parts would be useful for their playoff runs. Being an expansion team, you should be looking to accumulate cheap or reasonably priced young talent to build around and draft picks. Put some of your oldest veterans on the trading block before they retire and see what other teams are willing to offer.

Once the regular season ends and you get to watch the other teams in the playoffs (you didn't really think you were going to join them in your first year, did you?), its time to prepare for the draft. Being an expansion team, you probably have a very good shot at a top lottery pick.

A two point upset victory over the Milwaukee Bucks and some nice trade offers waiting for me at the office for Shawn Kemp – two contenders have started a bidding war for him. The Sacramento offer is a good one – talented young center Keon Clark, and an extra front court player, Scott Pollard. The Kings are looking to dump salary, but Clark is a young guy we can build around... so we agree to the deal. Then Sacramento does something incredible – they change the offer, asking for our point guard Travis Best in the deal. I confer with my staff and we come up with a counter offer – we change Scott Pollard to young Kings point guard Mateen Cleeves and have the Kings add their first round pick. The Kings agree to the deal... suddenly the future is looking so much brighter.

Hopefully, you've accumulated a number of other first round picks, and now you can really start to build your team. As we mentioned earlier in the "Building A Franchise" section of this book, scouting the prospects is especially important to building teams that need a lot of pieces to contend. Invest your budget in plenty of scouting visits so you can get the very best information on the players available to you in the draft.

The other thing you're going to spend your money on is free agents. Unless you took on a bunch of salary in trades, you should have more salary cap room than any other team in the league. After the draft, teams will pare down their rosters, and you'll find that there will be a good selection of talent filling the free agent pool. Invest in young guys that still have plenty of

upside. Dropping a bundle on a guy like Michael Jordan may help you immediately, but chances are he won't be around to help you by the time your franchise is ready to contend.

Any GM can build an instant contender by grabbing a selection of superstars off NBA teams. The real satisfaction comes from taking three seasons and turning a pile of NBA compost into a perennial title contender.

Create-A-Player: Paging Dr. Frankenstein to the Hardwood, Please

NBA 2K3 has 29 full NBA rosters, a large free agent pool, and a number of all-decade all star squads from which to grab players to upgrade your team. But what if you are a Houston Rockets fan and are trying to create the most accurate roster possible to run Franchise Mode. As all good Rockets fans know, the 2002-03 edition of the Rockets is quite different from the 2001-02 edition because of a certain extremely tall center that they chose with the first pick in the NBA Draft. Nothing against current Rocket center Kelvin Cato, but the Rockets with a 7-5 shot blocking, outside shooting draft pick in the middle of their offense is a much more difficult team to deal with.

That's where the NBA 2K3 Create-A-Player mode comes in. Build any player from scratch, at almost any height and body type, and save him to your memory card. Then assign him to your franchise and get ready to start winning more games.

Here's a step-by-step guide to creating that monstrous center your team covets.

Step 1: The Basics

The first screen is typical of most create-a-player modes: naming your player, choosing his position, jersey number, university he attended (NBA 2K3 has hundreds of real schools to pick from), whether he's left or right-handed, and most importantly since this is basketball, player height. Player heights can range from 4'6" to 7'6". We'll make our center 7'5" – just to put the fear of God into Shaq.

The next couple of screens are concerned with the appearance of your player – whether he has facial hair, face type, body thickness (arms, wrists, neck, chest, etc), and if he'll be wearing any kind of sweatbands or support braces/sleeves.

Step 2: The Important Stuff - Abilities

NBA 2K has player templates that will pre-set a player's key abilities if you want him to be of a certain type. For example, if you're building a center, you can choose a "banger" template, a finesse type, or a defensive specialist. Even if you choose a template, you can still adjust the player's abilities by adding or subtracting points from the 20 ability categories.

Introducing the newest Houston Rocket - "Big Rook"

Stats:

Close: 93
Medium: 76
Three Point: 77
Free Throw: 83
Layup: 88
Dunk: 97
Ball Handling: 50
Passing: 60
Low Post Offense: 85
Low Post Defense: 96
Blocking: 95
Stealing: 70
Offensive Rebound: 75
Defensive Rebound: 80
Speed: 65
Stamina: 70
Durability: 75
Offensive Awareness: 75
Defensive Awareness: 90

Step 3: Give Him a Job!

Once you have finished creating your player, he will reside in the free agent pool until you assign him a team. After you assign your created player to a team, you must go to Team Rotations and activate him, and place another player in reserve.

Now you're ready to pick a mode and test your new player. Make sure if you created a talent, you place him in a starting spot on your team.

Big Rook makes his impact felt immediately. First game line: 7 pts (2-9 shooting), 9 rebounds, 3 Blocks.

Get in the Game

Biorhythms Affect Game Play in NBA 2K3

There are five different levels of Biorhythm: Ice Cold, Struggling, Normal, Heating Up, and On Fire. The player's ratings will go up or down depending on this during a game. The levels could change each time a user plays NBA 2K3. There's no way to make your player On Fire every game.

This changes game-to-game based on a player's consistency. Players who are streaky tend to fluctuate game to game, whereas solid players tend to be "normal" or better. A player's Biorhythms can also change within a game, depending upon how well a player is doing.

The obvious case is where a player is "struggling" and the user goes for some easy lay-ups to bring a player's Biorhythms up. This is the most basic one and the easiest to understand. There is also an option to turn this ability on or off. But knowing it exists will help you develop a strategy to try a few easy shots with a marquee player before trying to drain the three-pointer to put more room between you and your competition.

Go To Guys Have the Clutch Factor!

The "Clutch Factor" kicks in with two minutes left in the fourth quarter. Only certain "Superstar" players like Kobe Bryant, Ray Allen, Dirk Nowitzki, Vince Carter or Michael Jordan. Making a three-pointer at the buzzer with two defenders in your face is very possible if you have decent timing with the shot and are using an NBA superstar.

Basically this option is a "step-up factor" where superstar players, or players known for being the Go To Guys in the clutch get a slight attribute bonus during crunch time.

Crunch time or "Clutch time" is basically the final moments of Overtime (OT) or of regulation play during a game. It's a subtle effect that gamers should be aware of, as they can use it to take advantage of their opponent. It's also an option that you can turn on or off.

Super Secret NBA 2K3 Codes

Street Trash: SPRINGER
Sega and VC hidden teams: MEGASTARS

Instructions below are the same on all consoles:

From the Main Menu select Options > Game Play

On the Gameplay Screen simultaneously press Left on the Left Analog Pad, Right on the D-Pad, and the Start Button

Back out to the Options Screen and notice the new option "Codes"

Select Codes and enter any code, press Enter, and a popup should tell you that you have unlocked the code

Get in the Game

Exclusive Strategies

There are a number of tricks and techniques in NBA 2K3 that once you know about them and practice them a little, will send you well on your way to fooling your opponent, whether it is another human competitor or the in-game artificial intelligence.

Maximum Passing Revealed

This feature defaults to OFF which means in order to use it you have to go into the Game options menu and turn it ON. It allows users to have control over which type of pass is thrown. Tapping the pass button (the X button on the PlayStation 2 controller, the A button on the Xbox and the A button on the GameCube) will allow you to execute an overhead pass, or lob pass if it's a post up situation. Holding the pass button down will allow you to throw a faster bounce or chest pass, bounce pass exclusively if in a post situation. The idea here is that an overhead makes it tougher to steal, however a chest or bounce pass is faster. Defaulting this option to OFF means the AI picks the best pass for the situation.

Execute Flashy Passes

Sometimes you'll see a good passer make a flashy pass. This happens automatically, and signals a good scoring opportunity. Basically flashy passes are made when the passer is rated high enough, and when the receiver is on the fast break or cutting to the rim. The idea here is to signal to the user that he should take the shot right when the pass is completed because his receiver will be in prime scoring position. It's fun to look at but it also serves a specific function.

Icon Passing

If you want to be able to get the ball to a particular player either in the paint or as you are working it up the floor you can bring up the Icon Passing symbols. This will allow you to pass the ball to a particular player.

To bring up the icons hit the Triangle button on the PlayStation 2 controller during game play, the Y button on the GameCube and the Y button on the Xbox version of NBA 2K3.

Fake the Pass

If you want to fake out the defenders during man-to-man coverage, push in on the right analog stick on the Xbox and PlayStation 2 controllers and press the Z button and the A button on the GameCube controller. If the defender bites, which he will do most of the time, you will get a free lane to the bucket.

Change Your Shot in Mid Air

Say you are going up for a dunk and you think there is a chance the defender is going to block your shot. Press the Square button a second time. As long as you do it while your player is still in the air, the animation will change from a dunk to a lay-up.

Executing the Alley Oop

Watch for one of your players to call for the ball as he moves towards the basket. Pass him the ball after he calls for it and he will either do an Alley Oop or a Monster Dunk depending on his rating. The higher the player's dunk rating the higher the likelihood of being able to pull off one of these incredible maneuvers.

Maxxing Out Your Ability

The Turbo Bar will refill slowly after using it all up. It gives any player a speed burst, but doesn't change color if their biorhythm changes.

Holding down the Turbo Button while pressing the Crossover Button will give you a more extreme and effective crossover than not holding the Turbo Button. To execute this on the various versions of the game, hold the R1 button on the PlayStation 2, and the right trigger button on the GameCube and the Xbox (controllers).

Stealing passes can also be attempted using the Turbo Button. To attempt to steal a pass use the Square Button on PS2, X button on Xbox, and B button on GameCube. While holding the Turbo Button and performing the Steal Pass the player will run faster and farther and have a better chance at stealing the pass.

The Art of the Dunk

Players highly rated in the dunk category (rated at 90 or higher) will execute more incredible high-flying maneuvers above the rim like reverse slams, tomahawk jams, 360 dunks, or a windmill slams.

There are no specific ways to pull off better dunks but the higher the dunk ratings are for a particular player the better the dunks' animations will be!

See the ratings below to see who the top rim rockers are.

Shawn Marion - Phoenix Suns	95
Ricky Davis - Cleveland Cavaliers	95
Vince Carter - Toronto Raptors	90
Kobe Bryant - Los Angeles Lakers	90
Steve Francis - Houston Rockets	90
Kevin Garnett - Minnesota Timberwolves	90
Darvin Ham - Milwaukee Bucks	90
Michael Finley - Dallas Mavericks	90
Tracy McGrady - Orlando Magic	90
Jason Richardson - Golden State Warriors	90
Jerry Stackhouse - Detroit Pistons	90
Gerald Wallace - Sacramento Kings	90

Other NBA Stars that Rock the Rim!

Shaquille O'Neal - Los Angeles Lakers
Dirk Nowitzki - Dallas Mavericks
Michael Jordan - Washington Wizards

Understanding the Rules

Everyone knows that the NBA has its fair share of rules, but understanding them better will help you not get caught when you break them. Also, if you know how to use the Game Sliders, you can actually bend the rules in your favor.

In this segment we will clarify a few of the rules that you may not completely understand.

Five Seconds Back to the Basket

This infraction takes place when you are posting up on offense, your mind wanders, and you don't do anything for five seconds. It's at the referee's discretion and he can count to five, so expect to be called for this violation if you daydream as you stroll through the paint.

Defensive Three-Second Violation

This is called when you are not within an arm's length of the player you are covering. If the player under your surveillance takes the ball to the top of the key and you stay by yourself under the basket, you will be whistled.

However, the referees in NBA 2K3 put their whistles away when it comes to calling illegal defenses. So you can double-team any player you want, but the double team sometimes backfires, leaving a skillful player open.

Photo by Ron Turienne/ NBAE/Getty Images

Rookie Sensations

Two things determine which rookies rise to the top of their class in the NBA: opportunity and talent. The class of 2002 is loaded with some stand-out talent, but it's the players that are heading to teams that had poor records last season that have the best chance to shine.

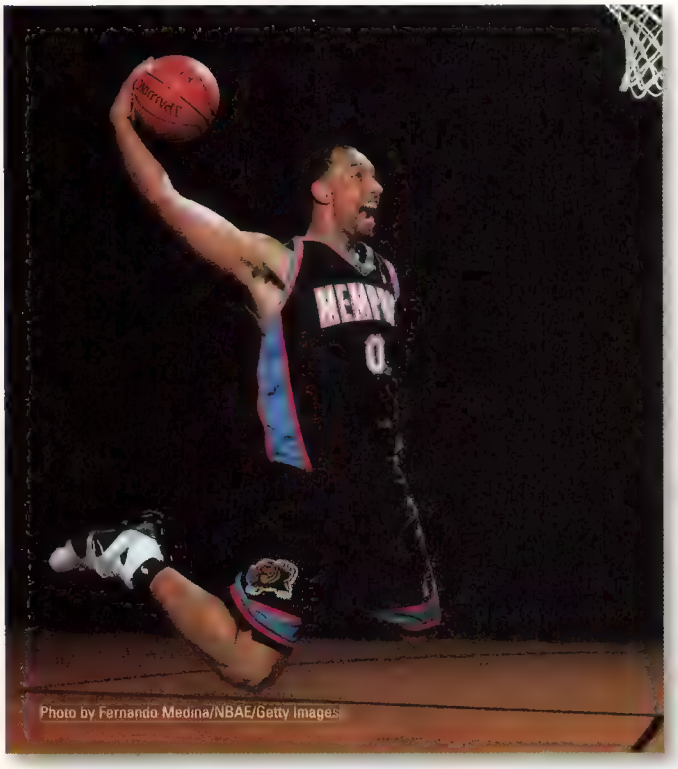


Photo by Fernando Medina/NBAE/Getty Images

Drew Gooden, Small Forward, Memphis Grizzlies:

The selection of 6-10 Kansas forward, Drew Gooden, kicked off Jerry West's tenure as the head of basketball operations for the Memphis Grizzlies. West, who was the architect of the the 80's Lakers dynasty, knows how to build a basketball team, and knew one of the Grizzlies' serious flaws was rebounding. Gooden, who pulled down about 10 boards a game at Kansas, is just what the Griz need, and should make one of the biggest impacts of any of the Class of 2002. Gooden isn't just a rebounder, though. He has a variety of moves in the paint and played all three frontcourt positions while at Kansas.

Ratings	74	Handle	70	RebD	78
Close	89	Pass	55	Speed	70
Mid	70	PostOf	75	Stam	88
3Pt	54	PostD	70	Dur	80
Freethrow	70	Block	70	DefAwr	70
Layup	70	Steal	55	OffAwr	75
Dunk	80	RebO	70		

Jay Williams, Point Guard, Chicago Bulls:

There is probably no team in the NBA more desperate for a talent infusion than the Chicago Bulls. With the second pick in the NBA Draft, the Bulls nabbed their point guard for years to come, Duke's Jay Williams. Williams was the college player of the year after averaging 21.3 points and 5.3 assists for Duke as a junior. Williams is an excellent floor leader who also has the ability to score in bunches. He should help improve Chicago's win total, but probably needs some more help to get the Bulls into the playoffs.

Ratings	80	Handle	90	RebD	60
Close	84	Pass	75	Speed	90
Mid	83	PostOf	75	Stam	94
3Pt	81	PostD	60	Dur	90
Freethrow	67	Block	50	DefAwr	70
Layup	85	Steal	70	OffAwr	80
Dunk	60	RebO	55		

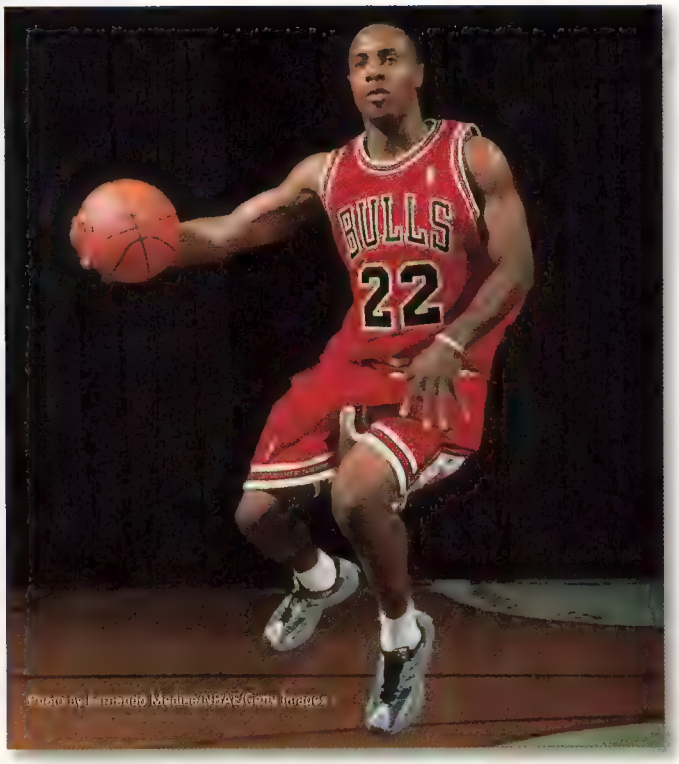


Photo by Fernando Medina/NBAE/Getty Images

Rookie Sensations

Frank Williams, Point Guard, NY Knicks:

Williams' ability to take over a game and floor leadership made him one of the best point guards in the country while he was at Illinois. While he may not get the ink that fellow point guard, Jay Williams, receives, he is as desperately needed by the Knicks as Williams is by the Bulls. Williams is a skillful passer and a top defender and shouldn't have much trouble supplanting starter Charlie Ward by mid-season.

Ratings	70	Handle	85	RebD	60
Close	72	Pass	70	Speed	80
Mid	71	PostOf	55	Stam	89
3Pt	69	PostD	60	Dur	80
Freethrow	81	Block	55	DefAwr	70
Layup	70	Steal	70	OffAwr	70
Dunk	60	RebO	50		

Mike Dunleavy, Small Forward, Golden State Warriors:

The Golden St.ate Warriors have added a number of talented rookies over the past two years, and Dunleavy is expected to be among the best of them. He will be handed the starting small forward role right away, but many NBA experts think he's ready. At 6'9", Dunleavy should help out with rebounding (an immediate need of Golden St.) and is an excellent long-range sniper.

Ratings	76	Handle	75	RebD	75
Close	82	Pass	60	Speed	75
Mid	76	PostOf	70	Stam	90
3Pt	80	PostD	65	Dur	80
Freethrow	70	Block	60	DefAwr	70
Layup	75	Steal	65	OffAwr	75
Dunk	70	RebO	65		

Caron Butler, Small Forward, Miami Heat:

6'7" Butler fell all the way to the 10th pick due to some background issues that scared several teams off, and Pat Riley was waiting with open arms. Butler will step right into the starting small forward position vacated by Kendall Gill and should add scoring, rebounding and an overall athleticism that position lacked last season.

Ratings	76	Handle	75	RebD	75
Close	82	Pass	60	Speed	75
Mid	76	PostOf	70	Stam	90
3Pt	80	PostD	65	Dur	80
Freethrow	70	Block	60	DefAwr	70
Layup	75	Steal	65	OffAwr	75
Dunk	70	RebO	65		

Dajuan Wagner, Point Guard, Cleveland Cavaliers:

Camden New Jersey's Dajuan Wagner went from being the top high school player in the country, to the star freshman on a rebuilding Memphis State team (coached by ex-NBA coach John Calipari), to the starting point guard job on the Cleveland Cavaliers. To add to the pressure on him, he has to replace one of the top point guards in the NBA, All-Star Andre Miller, who was shipped off to the LA Clippers. It is going to be a difficult learning process for Wagner, who is really more of a shooting guard, but ultimately his unquestioned talent will help him contribute to the Cavs.

Ratings	76	Handle	85	RebD	55
Close	84	Pass	75	Speed	90
Mid	76	PostOf	60	Stam	94
3Pt	79	PostD	50	Dur	80
Freethrow	72	Block	55	DefAwr	65
Layup	85	Steal	60	OffAwr	75
Dunk	70	RebO	50		

Other Rookies To Watch For:

Atlantic Division
Juan Dixon, Washington Wizards
Jared Jefferies, Washington Wizards
Sam Clancy, Philadelphia 76ers

Central Division
Dan Dickau, Atlanta Hawks
Roger Mason, Chicago Bulls
Lonny Baxter, Chicago Bulls

Midwest Division
Nikoloz Tskitishvili, Denver Nuggets
Maybyner Hilario, Denver Nuggets
Emanuel Ginoboli, San Antonio Spurs
Bostjan Nachbar, Houston Rockets

Pacific Division
Kareem Rush, LA Lakers
Melvin Ely, LA Clippers
Casey Jacobsen, Phoenix Suns
Jiri Welsch, Golden St. Warriors

Bring Your "A" Game

Many sports gamers are very competitive and they like to showcase their skills to the world. Up until now it's been fairly difficult, but Sega Sports and Visual Concepts have come up with a way to create some big time rivalries between NBA 2K3 users.

This secret weapon comes in the form of the Sega Sports Challenge. This competition will allow those who choose to participate to see who is a bench player and deserves a big sneaker deal when it comes to playing other NBA 2K3 gamers.

The Sega Sports Challenge lets you rank yourself among other members of the Sega Sports community, while competing for honor, glory, and big prizes. Joining the Sega Sports Challenge is simple – all you need is a supported Sega Sports 2K3 game for the Sony PlayStation 2, Microsoft Xbox or Nintendo GameCube and a free SegaSports.com login account.

Instructions for all platforms:

To Enable the Sega Sports Challenge do the following:

1. From the Main Menu select Sega Sports Challenge
2. Select User Records and "create new user"
3. Enter a User name and press Enter
4. Back out to the Sega Sports Challenge Screen and select Enable Challenge
5. Back out to the Main Menu and you will have only Quick Game, Load/Save, and Sega Sports Challenge
6. Select Quick Game and start up a game with any team you want to use

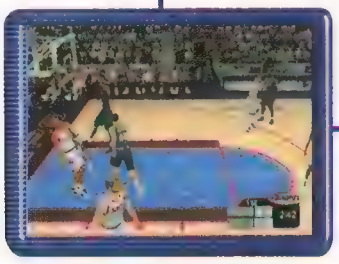
Taking the Challenge!

When you've completed a game go back and select Sega Sports Challenge and select Single Game Record Board to view your stats and new Challenge Code.

The Per Game Average Board will give you a Challenge Code after you have completed five games. The codes can be entered on www.segasports.com so you can see how you rank among other NBA 2K3 players in your city, state or in other parts of the world!

NO CHEATING ALLOWED!

When the Sega Sports Challenge is enabled certain options in gameplay will be locked out such as Gameplay, NBA Rules, and Game Play Sliders



Sega Sports Challenge

Are You Up for the Challenge?

Do you think you are the best NBA 2K3 player in the world? By taking the Sega Sports Challenge now you can prove it!

Sega Challenge Codes

To use theses exclusive Sega Challenge codes go to http://www.segasports.com and enter a code in the field on the left side of the screen.

Points Scored TiAAz3F%9siKY@NU

3 pointers made TiAAn5KE?b+?9wRo

Points Allowed TiAASHiz7t5haED8

Rebounds TiAAUXdTW+JS%wD8

NBA 2K3 Game Modes

NBA 2K3 is loaded with choices for any type of basketball fan. The opening menu leads to numerous sub-menus that will let you customize your game in almost any conceivable way.

Game Modes

Choose from 7 Different Game Options: Street, Playoffs, Franchise, Season, Network, Practice and Tournament.

Street Mode

Street Mode: In Street Mode, you take your team (either the Ringers or the Ballers) and can choose from nine legendary street courts and the entire current day NBA and NBA all-time great rosters. Along with 2 on 2, you can setup a 3 on 3, 4 on 4, or 5 on 5 game. The best team you can make for a Street Game is pretty much any player who has a lot of speed and can hit 3 pointers since it defaults to Rookie difficulty. Steve Francis, Tracy McGrady, Kobe Bryant, Paul Pierce, Ray Allen, and Allen Iverson are all excellent choices for teammates in Street Mode.

If you use legendary players, good choices would be Magic Johnson, Michael Jordan, Larry Bird, Nate Archibald, Pete Maravich, or Bob Cousy, to name a few.

There are also specific plays for the 2 on 2, 3 on 3, and 4 on 4 games. One isn't necessarily better than the other since getting an open 3 with a good 3-point shooter is money and doing a crossover past your defender is an easy dunk.

The real joy of Street Mode is watching John Stockton doing a between the legs dunk while running Shaq over in the rain.

Oh, and the Xbox is the only version with Heatwave effect in Street.

Tournament Mode

Customize a tournament playoff tree of 4, 8 or 16 NBA teams. Tournament mode is different from Playoffs mode because one loss in Tournament and you're out.

NBA Rules

Choose whether you'll be using all NBA rules or turning them off – some of the rules choices include: Shot Clock, Out of Bounds, Back Court Violation, Eight Seconds Half Court, and Goaltending, to name a few.

Game Speed

There are three game play speeds in NBA 2K3, Slow, Normal and Fast. Time isn't tinkered with in any one of the three different settings, but the players move and react slower or faster depending on which mode you select.

For example, if you select Slow and have five-minute quarters, the game will take you an hour or so to finish.

On Normal speed it will take you thirty minutes to finish a game with five minute quarters.

If you select a Fast game, it won't be that much shorter than if you had chosen Normal, but it will knock five to 10 minutes off for a 20 to 25 minute NBA 2K3 gaming experience if you select five-minute quarters.

NBA 2K3 Game Play Slider Bars - The Tuning Option

In addition to being packed full of options and modes, NBA 2K3 contains Game Play Slider bars that lets you tune the game specifically to decrease or increase the difficulty or ability in almost every facet of the game. There are 29 different categories to adjust. Here's a brief description of what they each do:

Close Shot % (Home/Away)

The home or away team has its ability to make close shots increased/decreased

Medium Shot % (Home/Away)

The home or away team has its ability to make medium shots increased/decreased.

3pt Shot % (Home/Away)

The home or away team has its ability to hit from beyond the arc increased/decreased.

Dunk % (Home/Away)

The home or away team has its ability to dunk the ball increased/decreased.

Lay Up % (Home/Away)

The home or away team has its ability to make a lay up increased/decreased.

Dunk/Lay Up Vs. Shot Tendency (Home/Away)

Tendency for a shooter to drive the lane for a dunk/lay up on an attempted shot.

AI Close Shot Tendency

The artificial intelligence's tendency to take a close shot (1-6 feet from the basket). Moving this slider up will make the computer opponent attempt more close shots, moving it down, the computer will shoot more often from farther out.

AI Medium Shot Tendency

Same as with Close Shot Tendency, moving this slider up forces computer to take more shots that are from medium range.

AI 3pt Shot Tendency

The AI's tendency to take 3 pt shots.

AI Dunk/Lay Up Tendency

The AI's tendency to drive the paint for a shot.

Charge/Block Fouls

Raising this slider will cause the referees to call more blocking fouls, lower it and the calls will more likely be charging.

Pushing Fouls

Raising this slider will cause the referee to call more pushing fouls.

Shooting Fouls

Raising this will make the refs more sensitive to shooting fouls – calling them more often.

Reaching In Fouls

The slider that adjusts the ref's sensitivity to reaching in fouls.

Steal Rating

Raises the stealing ability of both the player and the computer.

Block Speed, Ball Handling, Dunk, Offensive Awareness, Defensive Awareness, Injury Frequency

Raising the slider of any of these increases the ability of all the players in the game in the appropriate category.

Defensive Stopping Power

Moving up this slider will make the ball handler slide off the defender slower when running into them. Lowering it will make the ball handler slide off much more easily.

NBA 2K3 INTERNET RESOURCE

Weblinks

While we feel that our guide is without a doubt the most complete resource available on NBA 2K3, we do realize that there's a wealth of great NBA information out there and hope you will take some time to check out the sites listed below.

NBA-Related Sites

ESPN
www.espn.com

NBA
www.nba.com

ABC Sports
www.abcsports.com

NBA Team Sites

Atlanta Hawks
www.nba.com/hawks

Boston Celtics
www.nba.com/celtics

Chicago Bulls
www.nba.com/bulls

Cleveland Cavaliers
www.nba.com/cavs

Dallas Mavericks
www.nba.com/mavericks

Denver Nuggets
www.nba.com/nuggets

Detroit Pistons
www.nba.com/pistons

Golden State Warriors
www.nba.com/warriors

Houston Rockets
www.nba.com/rockets

Indiana Pacers
www.nba.com/pacers

LA Clippers
www.nba.com/clippers

LA Lakers
www.nba.com/lakers

Memphis Grizzlies
www.nba.com/grizzlies

Miami Heat
www.nba.com/heat

Milwaukee Bucks
www.nba.com/bucks

Minnesota Timberwolves
www.nba.com/timberwolves

New Jersey Nets
www.nba.com/nets

New Orleans Hornets
www.nba.com/hornets

New York Knicks
www.nba.com/knicks

Orlando Magic
www.nba.com/magic

Philadelphia 76ers
www.nba.com/sixers

Phoenix Suns
www.nba.com/suns

Portland Trailblazers
www.nba.com/blazers

Sacramento Kings
www.nba.com/kings

San Antonio Spurs
www.nba.com/spurs

Seattle SuperSonics
www.nba.com/sonics

Toronto Raptors
www.nba.com/raptors

Utah Jazz
www.nba.com/jazz

Washington Wizards
www.nba.com/wizards

Other NBA 2K3 Related Sites

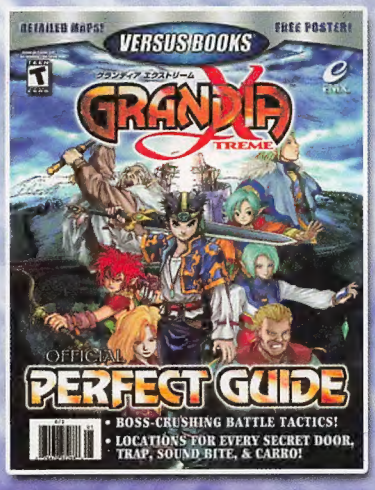
Versus Books Online
www.versusbooks.com

Sega Sports
www.segasports.com

Sony Computer Entertainment America (SCEA)
www.scea.com

Microsoft's Xbox Site
www.xbox.com

Nintendo of America
www.nintendo.com



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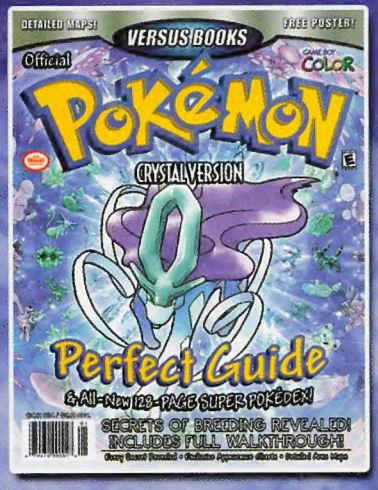
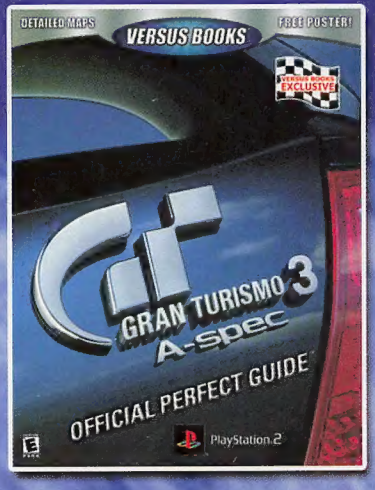
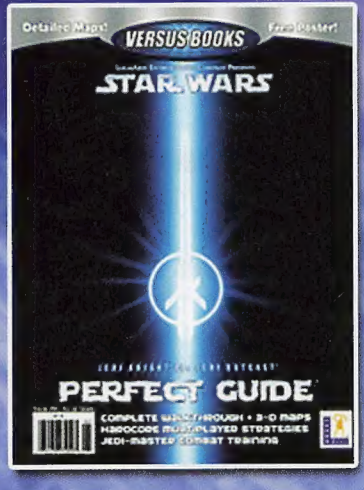
www.versusbooks.com







The best strategy guides for all your gaming needs.

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VERSUS BOOKS
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SEGA SPORTS
POWERED BY ESPN
Photo by Rocky Winder/NBAE/Getty Images

OFFICIAL PERFECT GUIDE®

Exclusive tips and strategies to help you dominate the boards, the paint and your competition.

Find out how to tweak your team using a variety of in-game options to maximize your teams offensive and defensive abilities.

All 29 NBA teams as well as a number of hidden teams are broken down.

SEGA SPORTS

NBA 2K3

Strategy and techniques for creating a player and building your own NBA dream team.

Get some offensive and defensive tips from NBA Legend Rick Barry, the player who helped the Golden State Warriors win their only NBA Championship.

Learn how to call for the ball, set a pick and get open for a dunk. Every strategy you need to know about how to improve your real-world and basketball video game skills!

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